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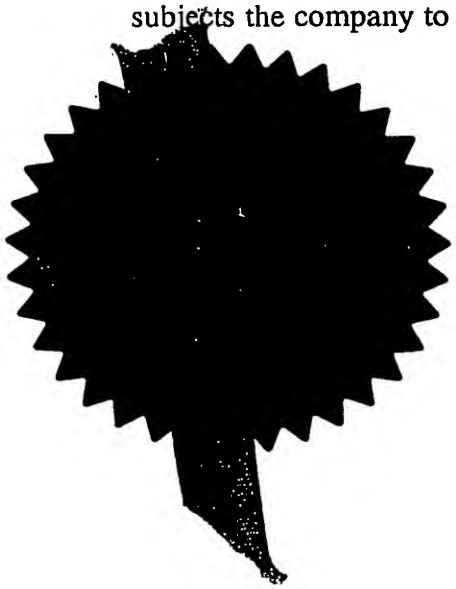

Signed P. Mahoney

Dated 6 March 2003

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1.	Your reference	**1-32411P1/FMI**
2.	Patent application number *(The Patent Office will fill in this part)*	0207224.7 — 27 MAR 2002
3.	Full name, address and postcode of the or of each applicant *(underline all surnames)*	**NOVARTIS FORSCHUNGSSTIFTUNG, ZWEIGNIEDERLASSUNG FRIEDRICH MIESCHER INSTITUTE FOR BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH, MAULBEERSTRASSE 66, CH-4058 BASEL, SWITZERLAND**
	Patent ADP number *(if you know it)*	8206583001
	If the applicant is a corporate body, give the country/state of its incorporation	**SWITZERLAND**
4.	Title of invention	**Tenascin-W Compositions and uses thereof**
	Name of your agent *(If you have one)*	
	"Address for service" in the United Kingdom to which all correspondence should be sent *(including the postcode)*	**B.A. YORKE & CO.** **CHARTERED PATENT AGENTS** **COOMB HOUSE, 7 ST. JOHN'S ROAD** **ISLEWORTH** **MIDDLESEX TW7 6NH**
	Patents ADP number *(if you know it)*	**1800001**

6.	If you are declaring priority from one ore more earlier patent applications, give the country and the date of filing of the or of each of these earlier applications and *(if you know it)* the or each application number	Country	Priority application number *(if you know it)*	Date of filing (day/month/year)
7.	If this application is divided or otherwise derived from an earlier UK application, give the number and the filing date of the earlier application	Number of earlier application		Date of filing (day/month/year)
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Statement of inventorship and right to grant of a patent *(Patents Form 7/77)*	
Request for preliminary examination and search *(Patents Form 9/77)*	
Request for substantive examination *(Patents Form 10/77)*	
Any other documents *(please specify)*	**Sequence listing pages 38-67**

11. I/We request the grant of a patent on the basis of this application

Signature Date

B.A. Yorke

B.A. Yorke & Co. **27 March 2002**

12. Name and daytime telephone number of person to contact in the United Kingdom

Mrs. E. Cheetham
020 8560 5847

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TENASCIN-W COMPOSITIONS AND USES THEREOF

The present invention relates to compositions being specifically expressed in tumours, to active agents having anti-tumour and/or anti-tumourigenic activity and to agents having the ability of changing a condition ameliorated by promotion of stem cell differentiation, in particular osteoblast formation, such as in osteogenesis, pharmaceutical compositions of these agents and the pharmaceutical uses of such agents and compositions. The invention also relates to *in vitro* methods of screening agents for anti-tumour and/or anti-tumourigenic activity as well as for agents ameliorating the promotion of stem cell differentiation, in particular osteoblast formation, such as in osteogenesis.

The adherence of cells to each other and to the extracellular matrix (ECM), as well as the cellular signals transduced as a consequence of such binding, are of fundamental importance to the development and maintenance of body form and function. The ECM has an important regulatory function in tissue homeostasis and, together with oncogenes and tumour suppressor genes is critically involved in tumourigenesis (reviewed in Boudreau, N. & Bissell, M. J. (1998) Curr Opin Cell Biol 10: 640-646 and Ruoslahti, E. (1999) Adv Cancer Res 76: 1-20).

In the more affluent countries of the world cancer is the cause of death of roughly one person in five. The American Cancer Society in 1993 reported that the five most common cancers are those of the lung, stomach, breast, colon/rectum and the uterine cervix. Tumors of this type often metastasize through lymphatic and vascular channels. Cancer is not fatal in every case and only about half the number of people who develop cancer die of it. The problem facing cancer patients and their physicians is that seeking to cure cancer is like trying to get rid of weeds. One way to treat cancer effectively is to get an early diagnosis. Most cancers are not extensively vascularized (and therefore not invasive) during the early stages of development. The transition to a highly vascularized, invasive and ultimately metastatic cancer which

spreads throughout the body commonly takes ten years or longer. If the cancer is detected prior to invasion, surgical removal of the cancerous tissue is an effective cure. However, cancer is often detected only upon manifestation of clinical symptoms. Generally, such symptoms are present only when the disease is well established, often after metastasis has occurred, and the prognosis for the patient is poor, even after surgical resection of the cancerous tissue. Early detection of cancer therefore is important in that detection may significantly reduce its morbidity. A reliable, non-invasive, and accurate technique for diagnosing cancer at an early stage would help save many lives.

However, although cancer cells can be removed surgically or destroyed with toxic compounds or with radiation, it is very hard to eliminate all of the cancerous cells. Apart from early diagnosis, a general goal is to find better ways of selectively killing cancer cells whilst leaving normal cells of the body unaffected. Part of that aim involves identifying new anti-cancer agents.

Apart from tumorigenesis, the ECM has an important regulatory function in tissue homeostasis and in the development and maintenance of body form and function, e.g. in the development or remodeling of skeleton or in bone morphogenesis. Bone marrow has stem cells with osteogenic potential and is made up of determined osteogenic precursor cells that are committed to osteogenesis and of inducible osteogenic precursor cells. Determined osteogenic precursor cells can differentiate into bone without an exogenous signal. Inducible osteogenic precursor cells require a molecular signal for initiating the differentiation program, e.g. induced by binding to extracellular matrix.

A number of molecules mediating cell adhesion have been identified and characterized at the molecular level both in vertebrates and invertebrates. Tenascins are a family of large multimeric extracellular matrix proteins, each consisting of homologous subunits built from variable numbers of repeated

is also found in fibrinogens. Tenascin-C was the first member of the family to be discovered in one instance as a myotendinous antigen (Chiquet, M. & Fambrough, DM. (1984) J Cell Biol 98(6):1937-1946) and in another, as a protein enriched in the stroma of gliomas (Bourdon, MA. et al (1983) Cancer Res 43(6):2796-2805). These discoveries already reflect the major sites of tenascin-C expression, namely tendons and ligaments and the extracellular matrix of tumor stroma. A further instance of the discovery of tenascin-C, also termed hexabrachion reflects its interaction with fibronectin (Erickson, HP. et al. (1984) Nature 311(5983):267-9). Enforced interaction of tumour cells with fibronectin can block proliferation in cell culture and can decrease tumour growth in nude mice (Akamatsu H. et al (1996) Cancer Res 56: 4541-4546 and Giancotti, F. G & Ruoslahti, E. (1990) Cell 60: 849-859). Tenascin-C was shown to disrupt the interaction of cells with fibronectin and in this manner may enhance tumour cell proliferation. Chiquet-Ehrismann, R. et al (1988) Cell 53: 383-390 were the first to show that tenascin-C binds to fibronectin, blocks cell attachment to fibronectin and increases proliferation of rat breast carcinoma cells (Chiquet-Ehrismann, R. et al (1986) Cell 47: 131-139).

Each tenascin family member exhibits a specific gene expression pattern during embryogenesis and in the adult (for review see Chiquet-Ehrismann, R. (1995) Experientia 51(9-10):853-62). Tenascin-R is an extracellular matrix component of the nervous system found mainly in brain tissue (Pasheva, P. et al. (2001) Prog Brain Res. 132:103-14. Review), whereas tenascin-X is prominently expressed in muscle and skin connective tissue. In one patient, tenascin-X deficiency has been reported to result in an Ehler's Danlos phenotype (Burch, GH. et al. (1997) Nat Genet 17(1):104-8). Tenascin-C is present in a large number of developing tissues including the nervous system. It is abundant in mature ligaments and tendons but is absent from skeletal and heart muscle, unless the muscle has been injured. Tenascin-C expression is elevated in essentially all carcinomas as well as in many other types of tumors (for review see Chiquet-Ehrismann, R. (1993) Semin Cancer Biol 4(5):301-10). Furthermore, tenascin-C is upregulated in wound healing (Latijnhouwers, MA. et al. (1996) J Pathol 178(1):30-5), during skeletogenesis (Koyama, E. et al (1996) J Orthop Res. 14(3):403-412 and Hall, BK. & Miyake, T. (1995) Int J

Dev Biol. 39(6):881-893) as well as in many diseases involving infections and inflammation (Schenk, S. et al. (1995) Int J Cancer 61(4):443-9).

To date there is only one report on tenascin-W available in the literature (Weber, P. et al. (1998) J Neurobiol 35(1):1-16). In this study, a cDNA encoding tenascin-W was isolated from a 20-28h postfertilization zebrafish cDNA library on the basis of the conserved epidermal growth factor-like domains found in all tenascin molecules. The expression pattern of tenascin-W was studied in the developing zebrafish. It suggests an involvement of tenascin-W in neural crest and sclerotome cell migration, as well as in the formation of the skeleton. Genebank sequence AJ001423 provides a zebrafish tenascin-W, and AL049689 provides a "novel human mRNA from chromosome 1, similar to Tenascin-R", whose function is not known.

The present invention provides a composition comprising an isolated nucleic acid molecule having a nucleotide sequence selected from the group consisting of:

(a) a nucleotide sequence as set forth in SEQ ID NO: 1;

(b) a nucleotide sequence encoding the amino acid sequence shown in SEQ ID NO: 2;

(c) a nucleotide sequence with at least 85% identity to the sequence of (a) or (b);

(d) a subsequence of more than 50 consecutive nucleotides of a sequence of (a), (b) or (c); and

(e) a nucleotide sequence complementary to any of the nucleotide sequences or subsequence in (a),(b), (c), or (d).

In one aspect of the invention, the isolated nucleic acid molecule having a nucleotide sequence preferably exhibits at least 85% identity to the sequence of (a), more preferably encoding a variant of the amino acid sequence shown in SEQ ID NO: 2, such as a variant comprising an amino acid deletion, addition (e.g. fusion proteins) or substitution of the amino acid sequence

NO: 2, more preferably the variant has stem cell differentiation inducing activity, in particular an activity that induces osteoblast development from stem cells. Most preferred is when the isolated nucleic acid molecule encodes a protein with the amino acid sequence shown in SEQ ID NO: 2.

The nucleic acid molecule can be an antisense molecule, in which case it might be desirable to have nucleotide residues that are resistant to nuclease degradation substituting some or all of the ribo- or deoxyribonucleotides.

Also provided are nucleic acid vectors comprising the nucleic acid molecules of the invention, as well as host cells comprising the vectors or nucleic acids, and transgenic, knockout or genetically modified animals (other than humans, in particular mice), comprising manipulated nucleic acids of the invention or absent the endogenous sequence.

The invention also provides a composition comprising an isolated polypeptide having an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of:

(a) an amino acid sequence as set forth in SEQ ID No. 2; and

(b) an amino acid sequence with at least 85% identity to the sequence of (a); and

(c) a subsequence of at least 30 consecutive amino acids of the sequence of (a) or (b), with the proviso that said subsequence does not fall within amino acid nos.1102 and 1152 of SEQ ID NO:2.

Preferably, the amino acid sequence in (b) comprises a conservative substitution of at least one amino acid of the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID: NO: 2. More preferably, the polypeptide or fragment has stem cell differentiation inducing activity, as described above. Useful fragments may exhibit an epitope recognized by polyclonal antibodies raised against the polypeptide having the amino acid sequence shown in SEQ ID NO: 2. for example. A particularly preferred polypeptide is that encoded by the amino acid sequence shown in SEQ ID NO: 2. Also provided are antibodies that are specifically reactive against the polypeptides of the invention.

In another aspect of the invention, a composition comprising an isolated nucleic acid molecule having a nucleotide sequence selected from the group consisting of:

(a) a nucleotide sequence as set forth in SEQ ID No. 1 or SEQ ID No. 3;

(b) a nucleotide sequence encoding the amino acid sequence shown in SEQ ID NO: 2 or SEQ ID NO: 4;

(c) a nucleotide sequence with at least 35% identity to any one of the sequences of (a) or (b), preferably (a);

(d) a subsequence of a least 15 consecutive nucleotides of the sequence of (a),(b) or (c); and

(e) a nucleotide sequence complementary to (a),(b), (c), or (d), and a pharmaceutically acceptable excipient, diluent or carrier.

In one embodiment, the nucleic acid molecule preferably encodes a protein having stem cell differentiation inducing activity. In another embodiment, the nucleic acid molecule has a subsequence that is antisense to SEQ ID NO:1 or SEQ ID NO:3, wherein the nucleic acid molecule may comprise nucleotide residues that are resistant to nuclease degradation. In another embodiment, the isolated nucleic acid molecule encodes the amino acid sequence shown in SEQ ID NO: 2 or SEQ ID NO:4. In yet another embodiment, the nucleic acid molecule has a subsequence selected from the group consisting of nucleotides 2380-3171 of SEQ ID No:1, nucleotides 2371-3162 of SEQ ID No:3, a complement of nucleotides 2380-3171 of SEQ ID No:1, and a complement of nucleotides 2371-3162 of SEQ ID No:3, or an RNA equivalent thereof.

Thus, also provided are nucleic acid compositions as described above for use as a pharmaceutical, as well as for the manufacture of a medicament, in particular for the prophylaxis or treatment of cancer or bone pathologies.

Also provided are compositions comprising tenascin-W, preferably recombinant tenascin-W, and a pharmaceutically acceptable excipient, diluent

(a) an amino acid sequence as set forth in SEQ ID No. 2 or 4;

(b) an amino acid sequence with at least 35% identity to the sequence of (a); and

(c) a subsequence of at least 30 consecutive amino acids of the sequence of (a) or (b).

Preferably, the polypeptide has stem cell differentiation inducing activity as described above. More preferably, the polypeptide is encoded by the amino acid sequence shown in SEQ ID NO: 4.

Thus, also provided is the use of tenascin-W for the treatment or prophylactic treatment of any disease or condition requiring increased tenascin-W levels, e.g. thrombosis, wound healing or atherosclerosis, as well as a condition ameliorated by the promotion of osteogenesis, e.g. bone healing, osteoporosis, as well as the use of tenascin-W as a stem cell marker.

Also provided are antibodies that specifically recognizes tenascin W for use as a pharmaceutical, as well as for the manufacture of a medicament, for the prophylaxis or treatment of cancer (e.g., glioblastoma, prostate, lung, colorectal, osteo- or breast carcinoma), including metastatic cancer, or for the prophylaxis or treatment of any disease or condition involving tenascin-W, e.g. excessive bone growth.

The present invention also provides methods for identifying agents for the prevention or the prophylactic treatment of tumourigenesis or the treatment or prophylactic treatment of tumours or cancer, or the treatment or prophylactic treatment of any disease or condition involving tenascin-W, e.g. a condition ameliorated by the promotion or inhibition of osteogenesis, comprising contacting a test compound with a tenascin-W expressing cell sample and then measuring a change in one or more of:

(a) cell proliferation, e.g. cell progression entering S-phase of the cell cycle;

(b) DNA synthesis;

(c) cell adhesion;

(d) cell spreading;

(e) focal adhesion and actin stress fibre formation on fibronectin; and

(f) cell binding to extracellular matrix (ECM)

relative to when said test compound is absent.

Optionally, the method further comprises measuring a change in tenascin-W expression relative to when the test compound is absent. The tenascin-W may have any one or more of the features described above. A particularly preferred assays is carried out in the form of an enzyme linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA).

Thus also provided, are agents for the prevention or the prophylactic treatment of tumourigenesis or the diagnosis or the treatment or prophylactic treatment of tumours, or the treatment or prophylactic treatment of any disease or condition involving tenascin-W, e.g. a condition ameliorated by the promotion of osteogenesis, identified by a screening method of the invention.

Also provided are methods of diagnosing or prognosing cancer comprising

(a) obtaining a sample from an individual;

(b) analysing said sample for the presence of tenascin-W; and

(c) correlating the presence of tenascin-W with an unfavourable prognosis or diagnosis.

Optionally, the method may further comprise correlating in an increase in tenascin-W in the sample relative to healthy tissue with an unfavourable prognosis or diagnosis. The method may also include the additional use of controls.

The present inventors have investigated extracellular matrix molecules, their expression during development, cell adhesion and proliferation of tumour cells and have characterized a novel member of the mammalian tenascin family. Prior to the present invention no tenascin-W had been identified from a

sequence encoding the mouse tenascin-W. Antisera were prepared against a fragment of tenascin-W, which detect tenascin W in tumour stroma, in the periosteum and in liver tissue, and cross react with tenascin W from several mammalian species. In particular, the inventors have discovered that tenascin-W is specifically expressed in metastatic tumour cells as well as in the periosteum, the stem cell compartment for osteogenesis.

Thus, in one aspect, the present invention provides a composition comprising an isolated nucleic acid molecule having a nucleotide sequence selected from the group consisting of:

(a) a nucleotide sequence as set forth in SEQ ID NO: 1;

(b) a nucleotide sequence encoding the amino acid sequence shown in SEQ ID NO: 2;

(c) a nucleotide sequence with at least 85% identity to the sequence of (a) or (b);

(d) a subsequence of more than 50, 75, 100, 200 or more consecutive nucleotides of a sequence of (a), (b) or (c); and

(e) a nucleotide sequence complementary to any of the nucleotide sequences or subsequence in (a),(b), (c), or (d).

The compositions include various types of nucleic acid, including genomic DNA, cDNA and mRNA, for example. In one aspect of the invention, the isolated nucleic acid molecule having a nucleotide sequence preferably exhibits at least 85% identity, more preferably 90% identity, most preferably 95, 98 or 100% identity to the sequence of (a). Also encompassed are nucleic acids that encode polypeptides having the amino acid sequence shown in SEQ ID NO: 2, or variant thereof such as a variant comprising an amino acid deletion, addition (e.g. fusion proteins) or substitution relative to the amino acid sequence shown in SEQ ID NO:2. The various nucleic acids that can encode these polypeptides therefore may differ because of the degeneracy of the genetic code, in that most amino acids are encoded by more than one triplet codon. The identity of such codons is well known in this art, and this information can be used for the construction of the nucleic acids within the scope of the invention. Variants differ from wild-type protein in having one or

more amino acid substitutions that either enhance, add, or diminish a biological activity of the wild-type protein. Once the amino acid change is selected, a nucleic acid encoding that variant is constructed according to methods well known in the art.

Preferably, the variant comprises a conservative substitution of at least one amino acid in said amino acid sequence in SEQ ID: NO: 2, more preferably the variant has stem cell differentiation inducing activity, in particular an activity that induces osteoblast development from stem cells. Most preferred is when the isolated nucleic acid molecule encodes a protein with the amino acid sequence shown in SEQ ID NO: 2.

The nucleic acid molecule can be an antisense molecule, in which case it might be desirable to have nucleotide residues that are resistant to nuclease degradation substituting some or all of the ribo- or deoxyribonucleotides.

Also provided are nucleic acid vectors comprising the nucleic acid molecules of the invention, as well as cells comprising the vectors or nucleic acids, and transgenic, knockout or genetically modified animals (other than humans, in particular mice), comprising manipulated nucleic acids of the invention or absent the endogenous sequence.

The invention also provides a composition comprising an isolated polypeptide having an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of:

(a) an amino acid sequence as set forth in SEQ ID NO: 2;

(b) an amino acid sequence with at least 85% identity, preferably 90, 95, 98 or 100% identity to the sequence of (a); and

(c) a subsequence of at least 30, 40, 50, 75, 100 or more consecutive amino acids of the sequence of (a) or (b), with the proviso that said subsequence does not fall within amino acid nos.1102 and 1152 of SEQ ID NO:2.

NO: 2. More preferably, the polypeptide or fragment has stem cell differentiation inducing activity, as described above. Useful fragments may exhibit an epitope recognized by polyclonal antibodies raised against the polypeptide having the amino acid sequence shown in SEQ ID NO: 2. for example. A particularly preferred polypeptide is that encoded by the amino acid sequence shown in SEQ ID NO: 2, derived from mouse tissue.

Therefore, also included within the invention are variants and derivatives of the polypeptide described by SEQ ID NO:2 or fragment thereof, whether produced by recombinant means or synthetic means or isolated from naturally occurring sources. For example, peptides having modified amino acids/peptide linkages, and peptides containing non-naturally occurring amino acids and/or cyclic peptides, which may have improved properties such as stability or activity are included. In addition the peptides of the invention may be in the form or a fusion with another protein, for example, tags for the targeting delivery or detection of the polypeptide (including fragments thereof).

A "variant" in terms of amino acid sequence defines an amino acid sequence that differs by one or more amino acids from another, usually related amino acid sequence. The variant may have "conservative" changes, wherein a substituted amino acid has similar structural or chemical properties (e.g. replacement of leucine with isoleucine). Less likely, a variant may have "non-conservative" changes, e.g. replacement of a glycine with a tryptophan. Similar minor variations may also include amino acid deletions or insertions (i.e. additions), or both. Guidance in determining which and how many amino acid residues may be substituted, inserted or deleted without abolishing activity (e.g., anti.cancer activity, osteoblast promoting activity, antigenic activity) may be found using computer programs well known in the art. Variants of the polypeptides of the invention include all forms of mutant variants, for example wherein at least one amino acid is deleted or substituted. Any changes involving substitution of amino acids are preferably neutral or conservative substitutions. Other variants include proteins or polypeptides comprising at least one additional amino acid in the sequence,

and/or further comprising an additional amino acid sequence or domain, such as fusion proteins, as is well known in the art.

Further variants of the polypeptides of the invention include those wherein at least one of the amino acids in the sequence is a natural or unnatural analogue. Also, one or more amino acids in the sequence may be chemically modified, e.g. to increase physical stability or to lower susceptibility to enzymic, particularly protease or kinase, activity.

Also provided are antibodies that are specifically reactive against the polypeptides of the invention. Methods for producing antibodies are well known in the art. An antibody specific for the ploypeptide of the invention can be easily obtained by immunizing an animal with an immunogenic amount of the polypeptide. Therefore, an antibody recognizing the polypeptide of the invention embraces either of polyclonal antibody and antiserum which are obtained by immunizing an animal, and which can be confirmed to recognize the polypeptide of this invention by Western blotting, ELISA, immunostaining or other routine procedure known in the art.

It is well known that if a polyclonal antibody can be obtained by sensitization, a monoclonal antibody is secreted by the hybridoma, which may be obtained from the lymphocytes of the sensitized animal (Chapter 6, Antibodies A Laboratory Manual, Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Press,1988).Therefore, monoclonal antibodies recognizing the polypeptide of the invention are also provided. Methods of producing polyclonal and monoclonal antibodies are known to those of skill in the art and described in the scientific and patent literature, see, e.g., Coligan, Current Protocols in Immunology, Wiley/Green, NY (1991); Stites (eds.) Basic and Clinical Immunology (7th ed.) Lange Medical Publications, Los Altos, CA, and references cited therein (Stites); Goding, Monoclonal Antibodies: Principles and Practice (2nd ed.) Academic Press, New York, NY (1986); and Kohler (1975) Nature 256: 495. Such techniques include selection of antibodies from libraries of recombinant

expressed by transient or stable expression vectors in mammalian cells, as in Norderhaug (1997) J. Immunol. Methods 204: 77-87.

In this invention, an antibody also embraces an active fragment thereof. An active fragment means a fragment of an antibody having activity of antigen-antibody reaction. Specifically named, these are active fragments, such as F(ab')2, Fab', Fab, and Fv. For example, F(ab')2 results if the antibody of this invention is digested with pepsin, and Fab results if digested with papain. Fab' results if F(ab')2 is reduced with a reagent such as 2-mercaptoethanol and alkylated with monoiodoacetic acid. Fv is a mono active fragment where the variable region of heavy chain and the variable region of light chain are connected with a linker. A chimeric antibody is obtained by conserving these active fragments and substituting the fragments of another animal for the fragments other than these active fragments. In particular, humanized antibodies are envisioned.

The nucleic acid and polypeptide sequences investigated herein have been found to be differentially expressed in samples obtained from metastatic cancer cell lines and are predictive of tenascin-W expression in metastatic cancer tissue, as well as in other types of cancer and diseases.

Accordingly, certain aspects of the present invention relate to nucleic acids differentially expressed in tumour tissue, especially metastatic cancer cell lines, polypeptides encoded by such nucleic acids, and antibodies immunoreactive with these polypeptides, and preparations of such compositions. Moreover, the present invention provides diagnostic and therapeutic assays and reagents for detecting and treating disorders involving, for example, aberrant expression of the subject nucleic acids.

Thus, in a further aspect of the invention, a composition is provided comprising an isolated nucleic acid molecule encoding tenascin W or a fragment thereof and a pharmaceutically acceptable excipient, diluent or carrier. The pharmaceutical use of nucleic acids encoding tenascin W has not previously been suggested and therefore in this embodiment, the nucleic

acids of the pharmaceutical compositions are not limited to the nucleic acids of the invention. In particular, the composition may comprise an isolated nucleic acid having a nucleotide sequence selected from the group consisting of:

(a) a nucleotide sequence as set forth in SEQ ID No. 1 or SEQ ID No. 3 (encoding human tenascin.W);

(b) a nucleotide sequence encoding the amino acid sequence shown in SEQ ID NO: 2 or SEQ ID NO: 4;

(c) a nucleotide sequence with at least 35% identity, preferably at least 40, 50, 60, 70, 80, 90, 95 or 100% identity to any one of the sequences of (a) or (b), preferably (a);

(d) a subsequence of at least 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 40, 50, 75, 100 or more consecutive nucleotides of the sequence of (a),(b) or (c); and

(e) a nucleotide sequence complementary to (a),(b), (c), or (d),

and a pharmaceutically acceptable excipient, diluent or carrier.

In one embodiment, the nucleic acid molecule encodes tenascin-W having the amino acid sequence as set forth in SEQ ID No. 2 or SEQ ID NO. 4 or an amino acid with at least 30%, preferably at least 50%, 70%, 80%, 90%, 95%, or 100% identity to a sequence corresponding to SEQ ID NO:2 or 4. The nucleic acid molecules are at least 10, preferably at least 15, 20, 30, 50, 75, 100 or more consecutive nucleotides of SEQ ID No. 1 or SEQ ID No.2 or a sequence complementary thereto.

In one embodiment, the invention provides a composition comprising a nucleotide sequence fragment selected from the group consisting of nucleotides 2380-3171 of SEQ ID No:1 or nucleotides 2371-3162 of SEQ ID No:3, a complement of nucleotides 2380-3171 of SEQ ID No:1 or of nucleotides 2371-3162 of SEQ ID No:3, and RNA equivalents thereof, which encode an epitope for the binding with an antibody paratope.

In another embodiment, the nucleic acid molecule preferably encodes a

the isolated nucleic acid molecule preferably encodes the amino acid sequence shown in SEQ ID NO: 2 or SEQ ID NO:4, most preferably that of SEQ ID NO:4.

In yet another embodiment, the nucleic acid molecule has a subsequence that is antisense to SEQ ID NO:1 or SEQ ID NO:3, wherein the nucleic acid molecule may comprise nucleotide residues that are resistant to nuclease degradation.

The nucleic acid may be antisense to all or a part of a nucleic acid which hybridizes under stringent conditions to SEQ ID No:1 or SEQ ID No:3, or antisense to a sequence having at least 70% identity with SEQ ID NO:1 or SEQ ID NO:3, that is able to hybridize under low stringency conditions to SEQ ID NO:1 or SEQ ID NO:3, and which encodes tenascin-W. Low stringency conditions employs around 0.01 x SSC buffer compared to high stringency which employs about a 10 fold greater concentration. Alternatively, the antisense RNA may be antisense to regulatory sequences of the tenascin-W gene, particular to 5' upstream sequences (promoter region) of the gene. Similarly, small RNAi oligonucleoties can be designed to inhibit expression of Tenascin-W in a specific manner.

The nucleic acids can be RNA or DNA, sense or antisense, and in some embodiments, double stranded or single stranded. In certain embodiments at least some of the nucleotide residues of the nucleic acids (sense or antisense) may be made resistant to nuclease degradation and these can be selected from residues such as phophorothioates and/or methylphosphonates.

The antisense nucleic acids as hereinbefore described can advantageously be used as pharmaceuticals, preferred pharmaceutical applications being for the manufacture of a medicament for the prophylaxis or treatment of conditions dependent on elevated Tenascin W levels, such as cancer.

Thus, the invention also provides a method of preventing or treating a condition dependent on Tenascin W, comprising administering to an individual

an effective amount of a nucleic acid, as hereinbefore described. Thus, the invention encompasses the use of such nucleic acid molecules as a pharmaceutical, as well as for the manufacture of a medicament, in particular for the prophylaxis or treatment of cancer or bone pathologies.

In yet another aspect, the present invention provides expression vectors capable of replicating in a host cell, comprising one or more vector sequences and a nucleic acid sequence encoding teneurin-W. The construct for use as a pharmaceutical is also provided, as well as its use for the manufacture of a medicament for the prophylaxis or treatment of cancer or the prophylaxis or treatment of bone pathologies.

Other embodiments of the invention include nucleic acid constructs capable of replicating in a host cell, comprising (a) at least one nucleic acid sequence portion encoding a tenascin-W protein or polypeptide of the invention (b) antisense nucleic acids as hereinbefore described (or their complement, for example, if expression of the antisense RNA in a cell is foreseen), or (c) nucleic acids as hereinbefore described and at least one nucleic acid sequence encoding a protein other than tenascin-W (or its homologues), e.g vector sequence. Such constructs are not naturally occurring sequences. The constructs lack essential sequences of DNA which might permit them to function as vectors but are not naturally occurring as "hybrid" nucleic acids. They may include nucleic acid sequences that function as linkers or restriction sites which include without limitation a transcriptional regulatory sequence operably linked to a nucleotide sequence of the invention so as to render said nucleic acid construct capable of replicating in a host cell. Preferred constructs are synthesised using methods of oligonucleotides synthesis well known to those of skill in the art.

Also provided are vectors comprising a construct as hereinbefore described. Preferred vectors are expression vectors, preferably plasmids or viruses although [illegible] are also provided for optionally in the form of plasmids.

The invention provides host cells containing vectors. Preferred host cells are eukaryotic cells, more preferably insect cells or mammalian cells.

Constructs, vectors and transformed host cells of the invention are of use as pharmaceuticals, as well as for the manufacture of a medicament for the prophylaxis or treatment of a condition dependent on tenascin W.

Similarly, in a further aspect of the invention, a composition is provided comprising tenascin W, preferably recombinant tenascin-W, or a fragment thereof and a pharmaceutically acceptable excipient, diluent or carrier. In preferred embodiments, the tenascin-W is a polypeptide having an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of:

(a) an amino acid sequence as set forth in SEQ ID No. 2 or 4;

(b) an amino acid sequence with at least 35% identity, preferably at least 50%, 70%, 80%, 90%, 95%,or 99% identity to the sequence of (a); and

(c) a subsequence of at least 5, 10, 15, 20, 30, 50, 70, 100 or more consecutive amino acids of the sequence of (a) or (b).

Preferably, the polypeptide has stem cell differentiation inducing activity as described above. More preferably, the polypeptide is encoded by the amino acid sequence shown in SEQ ID NO: 4.

Thus, also provided is the use of tenascin-W for the treatment or prophylactic treatment of any disease or condition requiring increased tenascin-W levels, e.g. thrombosis, wound healing or atherosclerosis, as well as a condition ameliorated by the promotion of osteogenesis, e.g. bone healing, osteoporosis, as well as the use of tenascin-W as a stem cell marker. In yet a further aspect, the tenascin-W protein is used as a pharmaceutical.

The present invention further provides the use of a tenascin-W, e.g. for the manufacture of a medicament, for the prevention or prophylactic treatment of tumourigenesis or the treatment or prophylactic treatment of tumours or cancer. The invention also includes the use of the tenascin-W for the manufacture of a medicament for the treatment or prophylactic treatment of

any one or more of bone disease, rheumatism, asthma, allergic diseases, autoimmune diseases, prevention of transplant rejection and any other diseases involving tenascin e.g. thrombosis, cancer, wound healing and artherosclerosis.

The invention therefore provides pharmaceutical compositions for humans or veterinary compositions for animal use that comprise one or more of the aforementioned active fragments of tenascin-W. The compositions may also include other active or non-active agents. Non-active agents may include a pharmaceutically acceptable excipient, diluent or carrier, but not limited to saline, buffered saline, dextrose and water.

The compositions and medicaments of the invention may therefore be used prophylactically in order to prevent tumours from forming, or they may be used in a curative or partly curative way to treat or contain a pre-existing tumourous condition. As well as tumours [illegible] malignant conditions may be prevented or treated with compositions or medicaments of the invention.

In a particular aspect, the present invention provides the use of the nucleic acid or proteins or polypeptides as hereinabove described, for radiuimmunotherapy. The same therapy has been described for brain tumours with overexpression or tenascin-C. Use of radiolabeled antibody is a promising approach to target radiotherapy directly into the tumor. Anti-tenascin-C antibodies are currently tested in phase I and II clinical trials. There are many reports in the literature on the progress of these clinical trials. Patients with malignant gliomas were administrated locoregional radioimmunotherapy (LR-RIT) using ^{131}I-labeled anti-tenascin antibody injected directly in the tumor (Riva et al., 1999a). The first results show that LR-RIT can be safely performed, with good results especially in patients with minimal disease. Similar approach was performed with ^{90}Y (a pure beta emitter)-labeled antibodies Riva et al., 1999b), with promising results. Potentially more efficient radioimmunotherapies were shown to be possible [illegible]

is now initiated in a phase I clinical study. It is as well a useful tool for precise imaging of tumors, since the presence of isotopes specifically targeted into the tumor allows sequential scintigraphies of the tumor (Riva et al., 1999a), and makes possible a direct estimation of the success of the therapy.

The tumours or tumour cells of the present invention are preferably those which express tenascin-W in the stroma. In particularly preferred embodiments the tumours are solid tumours, e.g. mesenchymal tumours such as osteosarcoma, glioblastoma or epithelial cancers such as breast, prostate, lung and colorectal carcinoma.

The invention further provides the use of tenascin-W for the treatment or prophylactic treatment of a condition ameliorated by the promotion of osteogenesis, e.g osteoporosis, osteoarthritis, treatment of cartilage and bone pathologies. A protein or polypeptide as hereinabove described may be used to be incorporated into implants including without limitation hip joints, knee joints, or broken bones, to promote osteogenesis.

The invention also provides a method of preventing or prophylactic treatment of tumourigenesis or of treatment or prophylactic treatment of tumours or cancer or of any one or more of rheumatism, asthma, allergic diseases, autoimmune diseases, prevention of transplant rejection or the treatment or prophylactic treatment of any disease involving tenascin-W, e.g., thrombosis, wound healing and atherosclerosis in an individual comprising administering an effective amount of a tenascin-W or a fragment thereof.

The invention also provides a method of treatment or prophylactic treatment of a condition ameliorated by the promotion of osteogenesis, e.g osteoporosis, osteoarthritis, treatment of cartilage and bone pathologies in an individual comprising administering an effective amount of tenascin-W or a fragment thereof.

The determination of an effective dose is well within the capability of those skilled in the art. For any compound, the therapeutically effective dose can be

estimated initially either in cell culture assays or in an appropriate animal model. The animal model is also used to achieve a desirable concentration range and route of administration. Such information can then be used to determine useful doses and routes for administration in humans.

A therapeutically effective dose refers to that amount of active agent which ameliorates the symptoms or condition. Therapeutic efficacy and toxicity of such compounds can be determined by standard pharmaceutical procedures in cell cultures or experimental animals (e.g., ED_{50}, the dose therapeutically effective in 50% of the population; and LD_{50}, the dose lethal to 50% of the population). The dose ratio between therapeutic and toxic effects is the therapeutic index, and it can be expressed as the ratio, LD_{50}/ED_{50}. Pharmaceutical compositions which exhibit large therapeutic indices are preferred. The data obtained from cell culture assays and animal studies is used in formulating a range of dosage for human use. The dosage of such compounds lies preferably within a range of circulating concentrations that include the ED_{50} with little or no toxicity. The dosage varies within this range depending upon the dosage form employed, sensitivity of the patient, and the route of administration.

The exact dosage may be chosen by the individual physician in view of the patient to be treated. Dosage and administration can be adjusted to provide sufficient levels of the active moiety or to maintain the desired effect. Additional factors which may be taken into account include the severity of the disease state (e.g. tumour size and location); age, weight and gender of the patient; diet; time and frequency of administration; drug combination(s); reaction sensitivities; and tolerance/response to therapy. Long acting pharmaceutical compositions can be administered on a daily basis, every 3 to 4 days, every week, or once every two weeks, depending on half-life and clearance rate of the particular formulation.

The present inventors have observed stem cells, especially the perineurium

wherein tenascin-W is used as a stem cell marker for cells including without limitation osteogenic precursor cells in the bone marrow. Therefore, also provided is a method of selecting stem cells or progenitor cells having the ability to differentiate into osteoblasts from other cells, not having this ability. Stem cells expressing tenascin-W can be detected by an antibody. The antibody recognizing tenascin-W can be detected using secondary antibodies specific for the tenascin-W antibody, which are optionally labelled with a radiolabel, an enzyme, avidin or biotin, or fluorescent materials (e.g. green fluorescent protein (GFP) or rhodamine), for example. The cells are characterized by having tenascin-W expression above basal levels and are preferably selected from a mixed population of cells using the fluorescence-activated cell sorter (FACS) (see for example Abe et al., Dev Biol. 1996; 180(2):468-72). The selected cells therefore carry a protein detectable by fluorescence. The sorted cells are useful for the production of biological parts of the body, e.g. bone tissue.

Also provided are antibodies that specifically recognize tenascin-W for use as a pharmaceutical, as well as for the manufacture of a medicament for the prophylaxis or treatment of cancer (e.g., glioblastoma, prostate, lung, colorectal, osteo- or breast carcinoma), including metastatic cancer, or for the prophylaxis or treatment of any disease or condition involving tenascin-W, e.g. excessive bone growth. In another aspect of the present invention, an antibody specifically reactive against tenascin-W or a fragment thereof, and the use of an antibody for the manufacture of a medicament for the prophylaxis or treatment of cancer, and the antibody for use as pharmaceutical is provided.

Antibodies that specifically recognize tenascin-W or a fragment thereof are also provided, in particular antibodies that recognise the above mentioned epitope.

Methods for detecting tenascin-W embrace, for example, the use of an antibody as referred to above, optionally with the use of an enzyme reaction. The antibody recognizing tenascin-W can be detected using secondary

antibodies specific for the tenascin-W antibody, which are optionally labelled with a radiolabel, an enzyme, avidin or biotin, or fluorescent materials (FITC or rhodamine), for example.

Also encompassed by the invention is the use of an antibody that specifically recognizes tenascin-W for the manufacture of a medicament, in particular a medicament for the prophylaxis or treatment of cancer, the prophylaxis or treatment of bone disease, or as a pharmaceutical. In particularly encompassed by the invention is the use of an antibody that specifically recognizes tenascin-W for the diagnosis of tumour, especially metastatic tumour.

In a further embodiment, the present invention provides a method for identifying agents for the prevention or the prophylactic treatment of tumourigenesis or the treatment or prophylactic treatment of tumours or cancer, or the treatment or prophylactic treatment of any disease or condition involving tenascin-W, e.g. a condition ameliorated by the promotion (or inhibition) of osteogenesis, comprising contacting a test compound with a tenascin-W expressing sample and then measuring a change in one or more of (a) cell proliferation, e.g. cell progression entering S-phase of the cell cycle; (b) DNA synthesis; (c) cell adhesion; (d) cell spreading; (e) focal adhesion and actin stress fibre formation on fibronectin; (f) cell binding to extracellular matrix (ECM), relative to when said test compound is absent.

Cells may be encouraged to proliferate by the addition of tenascin-W to the cell culture, preferably by coating the solid substrate therewith. A substrate can be any surface that promotes cell adhesion. The solid substrate may also be coated by other ECM which include without limitation fibronectin, collagen, etc. The cell cultures are preferably grown on a solid substrate or in a liquid medium. A first measurement of one or more of (a) to (f) may be made prior to contacting the cells with a test substance. A second measurement may be made thereafter. A multiplicity of further measurements may be made over a [illegible] contacting the cells with the test compound.

this way a time course of the cellular response(s) may be obtained and analysed.

In one preferred embodiment of the present invention, the presence of tenascin-W in the liquid medium is measured relative to when a test compound is absent. An increase in the level of tenascin-W present in the medium relative to when said test agent is absent correlates to an agent effective in the promotion of osteogenesis. A decrease in the level of tenascin-W present in the medium relative to when said test agent is absent correlates to an anti-proliferative or anti-tumour agent, or an agent effective in inhibiting osteogenesis or osteoblast formation.

In preferred aspects one or more of the following conditions arising after contacting cells with a test compound is indicative of an anti-proliferative or anti-tumour agent, or an inhibitor of osteoblast formation:

(a) a reduction in cell proliferation; or a decrease in the proportion of cells entering S-phase of the cell cycle;
(b) a reduction in DNA synthesis;
(c) an increase in cell adhesion;
(d) an increase in cell spreading;
(e) an increase in focal adhesion and actin stress fibre formation on fibronectin; and
(f) an increase in the binding of cells to ECM, preferably fibronectin;

In other preferred aspects one or more of the following conditions arising after contacting cells with a test compound may indicate an osteogenesis promoting agent:

(a) an increase in cell proliferation; or an increase in the proportion of cells entering S-phase of the cell cycle;
(b) an increase in DNA synthesis;

(c) and (d) an increase in the expression of bone-specific markers such as alkaline phosphatase activity, calcification or any others known in the art (e.g., Raouf and Seth, 2002, Bone 30: 463-71).

Actin stress fibre formation may be assayed according to the Actin Assembly Assay described in Bloom, L *et al* (1999) Mol Biol Cell 10: 1521-1536. Adhesion assays may be performed according to the method described in Bloom, L *et al* (1999).

In other embodiments, the method of the invention may further comprise control cells grown in the absence of test substance and (a), (b), (c), (d), (e), and/or (f) are measured in both control and test cultures. The test measurements can thereby be normalised with respect to the control.

The screening method further provides an essentially cell-free system for the identification of potential anti-tumour or tumour preventing agents or for an agent inhibiting osteogenesis. This method relies on the ability of a potential anti-tumour agent to prevent, inhibit or disrupt the binding between an ECM and tenascin-W. The nature of any disruption of the ECM and tenascin-W binding may be determined by performing a binding assay for ECM and tenascin (see e.g. example 9). For example, calorimetric methods may be used or measurement of labelled reagents. The relative amounts or concentrations of reagents and test substance may be varied, thereby permitting calculation of inhibition constants and other parameters, e.g. binding affinities. The optimisation of assay conditions will be well within the realm of one of ordinary skill in the art.

The system may further comprise a control without test substance and the binding is measured in the control, thereby permitting corresponding measurements in the test system to be normalised relative to the control.

Where one component of the assay (screening) system of the invention is

radiolabels e.g. ^{14}C or ^{3}H, dyes, metal sols, enzymes or biotin/avidin. By attaching such labels to "free" components in the system any binding assay may be carried out in solution in accordance with procedures well known in the art. After allowing the components to react solid phase particles can be separated from solution, e.g. by filtration or sedimentation (including centrifugation). In some embodiments immunoprecipitation may be used to separate bound and free labelled components. Usually, an antibody may be employed to bring an unlabelled component out of solution (whether or not this component has bound to another labelled component or not). After separation, the label present in solution (free) and the label present in or on the solid phase (bound) may be measured. Standard analyses of such bound and free data, e.g. Scatchard plots and the determination of affinity and inhibition constants for binding are well known to the person of ordinary skill in the art.

Where the solid phase is not particulate, e.g. in the form of a [illegible], such as a microtiter plate well, then binding assays measuring bound and free label may be performed but this will normally involve the removal of [illegible] from the wells after binding reactions have occurred. Advantageously, this assay format may dispense with the need for providing specifically labelled reaction components. Instead, labelled antibodies may be used to measure the binding of previously free reaction components to solid phase components.

In some embodiments the tenascin-W molecule, variant or fragment thereof may be attached directly to a solid phase. In preferred immunoassay embodiments of this type, tenascin-W bound to an ECM is measured using an antibody reactive against tenascin-W.

Immunological binding assays are known in the art. For a review, see Methods in Cell Biology Vol. 37: Antibodies in Cell Biology, Asai, (Ed.) Academic Press, Inc. New York (1993).

A label may be any detectable composition whereby the detection can be spectroscopic, photochemical, biochemical, immunochemical, physical or chemical. For example, useful labels can include ^{32}P, ^{35}S, ^{3}H, ^{14}C, ^{125}I, ^{131}I, fluorescent dyes (e.g. FITC, rhodamine and lanthanide phosphors), electron-dense reagents, enzymes, e.g. as commonly used in ELISA (e.g. horseradish peroxidase, beta-galactosidase, luciferase and alkaline phosphatase), biotin, dioxigenin, or haptens and proteins for which antisera or monoclonal antibodies are available. The label may be directly incorporated into a target compound to be detected, or it may be attached to a probe or antibody which binds to the target.

Throughout the assays of the invention, incubation and/or washing steps may be required after each application of reagent or incubation of combinations of reagents. Incubation steps may vary from about 5 minutes to several hours, perhaps from about 30 minutes to about 6 hours. However, the incubation time usually depends upon the assay format, analyte, volume of solution, concentrations, and so forth. Usually, the assays should be carried out at ambient temperature, although they may be conducted at temperatures; in the range 10°C to 40°C, for example.

A particularly preferred assay format is an enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA).

All of the aforementioned methods of screening of the invention are equally applicable to the screening of substances for biological activity and potential agents for any other disease or condition involving tenascin-W, e.g. wound healing or treatment of artherosclerosis.

Also included within the scope of the present invention are anti-tumourigenic, anti-tumour, anti-metastastic, (anti-)osteogenic, wound healing or anti-artherosclerosis substances or substances for the treatment or prophylactic treatment of any disease or condition involving tenascin-W identified by any of

includes pharmaceutical compositions for preventing or treating tumours, metastasis, or bone pathologies and comprising one or more of the substances identified by a method of the invention. For example, inhibitors of tenascin-W expression or activity are considered potential anti-cancer agents, whereas tenascin W or agonists thereof are considered agents effective in promoting osteogenesis, which can be used in vivo or ex vivo.

Thus, the present invention provides a novel mammalian member of the tenascin family and uses thereof. It permits the identification of agents effective against conditions dependent on tenascin-W, in particular anti-cancer agents or agents that promote osteogenesis, by performance of any of the methods of screening described herein. Preferred anti-cancer agents are those which inhibit proliferation of the cancer cells and which may be general anti-proliferative agents.

The invention includes all nucleic acid molecules and proteins and polypeptides as hereinabove described, as well as agents identified by performing the screens, and the use of these agents as pharmaceuticals, particularly as medicaments for the prophylaxis or treatment of cancer and other conditions dependent on tenascin W.

Thus, in a further aspect the invention provides for the use of tenascin-W and of an agent identified by a screening method of the invention as a pharmaceutical.

The invention further provides tenascin-W or an agent identified by a screening method of the invention, for the manufacture of a medicament for the prophylaxis or treatment of a condition dependent on tenascin-W, for use to treat cancer or bone diseases or an immunological defect.

The invention provides a method of preventing or treating a condition dependent on tenascin-W comprising administering to an individual an effective amount of a construct, vector, host cell or antibody described above.

The invention also provides a method of inhibiting a condition dependent on tenascin-W comprising administering an effective amount of the modulator identified by a screening method of the invention described above, for the treatment of cancer or bone disease or an immunological defect.

Also provided by the invention are the nucleic acid molecules, the proteins, and the agents referred to above in a pharmaceutical composition, possibly in the presence of suitable excipients known to one of ordinary skill in the art. The compositions may be administered in the form of any suitable composition as detailed below by any suitable method of administration within the knowledge of a skilled man. The preferred route of administration is parenterally. In parenteral administration, the compositions of this invention will be formulated in a unit dosage injectable form such as a solution, suspension or emulsion, in association with a pharmaceutically acceptable excipient. Such excipients are inherently nontoxic and nontherapeutic. Examples of such excipients are saline, Ringer's solution, dextrose solution and Hank's solution. Nonaqueous excipients such as fixed oils and ethyl oleate may also be used. A preferred excipient is 5% dextrose in saline. The excipient may contain minor amounts of additives such as substances that enhance isotonicity and chemical stability, including buffers and preservatives.

Any protein is administered at a concentration that is therapeutically effective to prevent allograft rejection, GVHD, allergy and autoimmune diseases. The dosage and mode of administration will depend on the individual. Generally, the compositions are administered so that the functional protein is given at a dose between 1 pg/kg and 10 mg/kg, more preferably between 10 ug/kg and 5 mg/kg, most preferably between 0.1 and 2 mg/kg. Preferably, it is given as a bolus dose. Continuous short time infusion (during 30 minutes) may also be used. The compositions according to the invention may be infused at a dose between 5 and 20 μg/kg/minute, more preferably between 7 and 15 μg/kg/minute.

According to a specific case, the"therapeutically effective amount"of a composition needed should be determined as being the amount sufficient to cure the patient in need of treatment or at least to partially arrest the disease and its complications. Amounts effective for such use will depend on the severity of the disease and the general state of the patient's health. Single or multiple administrations may be required depending on the dosage and frequency as required and tolerated by the patient.

The present invention also provides a method of diagnosing or prognosing cancer, or any other condition dependent on elevated tenascin W levels, comprising, (a) obtaining a sample from an individual; (b) analysing said sample for the presence of tenascin-W; and (c) correlating the presence of tenascin-W with a favourable prognosis or diagnosis.

The methods of the present invention will typically involve the determination of the presence, level, or activity of tenascin-W in a cell or tissue sample, which sample will often be obtained from a human, but one can also readily understand that samples tested by the present method can be obtained from agriculturally important mammals, such as cattle, horses, sheep, etc., or animals of veterinary interest, such as cats and dogs. The assay may be carried out on any cell or tissue sample, such as somatic tissues, germline tissues, or cancerous tissues, as well as on samples from body fluids, such as pleural fluid, blood, serum, plasma and urine.

A "sample" is the material being analyzed which is usually, but not necessarily, subjected to pretreatment to provide the tenascin-W in assayable form. This would normally entail forming a cell extract, methods for which are known in the art (for example, see Scopes, Protein Purification: Principles and Practice, Second Edition (Springer-Verlag, N.Y., 1987)).

In the broader aspects of the invention, there is no limitation on the collection and handling of samples as long as consistency is maintained. The sample is obtained by methods known in the art, such as, biopsies, surgical resections,

smears, or the like. Optionally, cells obtained in a sample may be propagated in cell culture.

Consistency of measurement of tenascin-W or tenascin-W activity in clinical samples can be ensured by using a variety of techniques. For example, to control for the quality of each tissue extract, another enzymatic activity, such as alkaline phosphatase, can serve as an internal control. In addition, an internal standard can be measured concurrently with tenascin-W in the sample as a control for assay conditions. Thus, the analyzing step can comprise detecting a control protein in the sample, optionally normalizing the value obtained for tenascin-W with a signal obtained with the control protein.

The presence of tenascin-W in the sample can be determined by detecting the tenascin-W protein using methods known in the art. In this invention, there are no limitations on the type of assay used to measure tenascin-W or tenascin-W activity. For example, tenascin-W can be detected by immunoassays using antibodies specific for tenascin-W. The antibody can be used, for example, in Western blots of two dimensional gels where the protein is identified by enzyme linked immunoassay or in dot blot (e.g., Sandwich) assays of total cellular protein, or partially purified protein.

Methods for sample concentration and protein purification are described in the literature (see Scopes, 1987). For example, if desired, the tenascin-W present in the cell extract can be concentrated, by precipitating with ammonium sulfate or by passing the extract through a commercially available protein concentration filter, e.g., an Amicon or Millipore, ultrafiltration unit. The extract can be applied to a suitable purification matrix, such as an anion or a cation exchange resin, or a gel filtration matrix, or subjected to preparative gel electrophoresis. In such cases, the tenascin-W and protein yield after each purification step needs to be considered in determining the amount of tenascin-W in a sample.

Tenascin-W may be detected using an antibody specific for tenascin-W, and a [illegible]

tenascin molecule. Optionally, the method may further comprise correlating in an increase in tenascin-W in the sample relative to healthy tissue. For example, tenascin-W can be detected using an antibody specific for tenascin-W expressed in tumour tissue and compared to antibody binding to any tenascin-W expressed (or non-specific reaction) in healthy tissue.

The sample is preferably a tissue sample mounted onto a solid surface for histochemical analysis. The presence of detectable, accessible tenascin-W indicates that tenascin-W is accessible to cells for binding. This leads to a unfavourable diagnosis or prognosis. If, on the other hand, the antibody does not react with tenascin-W in the tissue section, then there is an expectation that tenascin-W is not present. This leads to a favourable diagnosis or prognosis.

The present inventors have found that tenascin-W is specifically expressed in solid tumours, in particular metastatic tumour tissue or stroma thereof. The presence of tenascin-W therefore indicates a cancerous condition, in particular the presence of metastatic tumour tissue, whereas the absence of tenascin-W indicates healthy tissue or non-metastatic tumour tissue. Two variants of 170 and 190 kD tenascin-W were identified in developing mouse tissues by western blotting. High expression of the large variant of tenascin-W was found in the metastatic tumours of ras-transgenic mice, but not in the myc- or neuT-transformed non-metastatic tumours. The large variant of tenascin-W (190 kD) is indicative of unfavourable diagnosis; whereas the 170kD variant is indicative of more favourable prognosis or healthy individual.

In a preferred embodiment, the invention provides kits suitable for use in the diagnostic or prognostic methods of the invention. Such kits comprise reagents useful for carrying out these methods, for example, antibodies from one or more species specific for tenascin-W. Secondary antibodies that recognise either or both such primary anti-fibronectin antibodies can also be included for the purpose of recognition and detection of primary antibody binding to a sample. Such secondary antibodies can be labelled for detection e.g. with fluorophores, enzymes, radioactive labels or otherwise. Other

detection labels will occur to those skilled in the art. Alternatively, the primary anti-tenascin-W antibodies can be labelled for direction detection.

The invention is further described below, for the purpose of illustration only, in the following examples.

Example 1: Cloning of mouse tenascin-W

Mouse tenascin-W was cloned from a cDNA library of 19d whole mouse embryos (DupLEX-A DLM-110; OriGene Inc.). In a first step the following PCR primers derived from a sequence from chromosome 1, similar to Tenascin (Accession number AL049689) were used for nested PCR reactions with the Expand High Fidelity PCR System (Roche) using the mouse cDNA library as template. The first reaction was performed with the primer set 5'-TAGCAGCCCACAGCATCTACTTGCC-3' (SEQ ID NO:5) / 5'-ATTGCTGTTCTGCTGAACCTGACTGCA -3' (SEQ ID NO:6) and the second reaction with 5'-ATGGATCCAGAAATTGACGGCCCCAAAAACCTAG-3' (SEQ ID NO:7) / 5'-ATAAGCTTGTGGAGAGGGTGGTGGATACATTTC-3' (SEQ ID NO:8). The second primer set included a BamHI and a HindIII restriction site, respectively, to enable the directed cloning into the bacterial expression vector pQE30 (Qiagen) supplying a C-terminal His-tag for the purification of the recombinant protein. The protein was expressed and purified by affinity chromatography to a Ni-NTA matrix (Qiagen) according to the manual of the supplier. The protein was purified under native conditions and was eluted with 250mM imidazole. The recombinant protein encompasses the three most C-terminal fibronectin type III repeats of tenascin-W (aa 794-1057 of the complete amino acid sequence of mouse tenascin-W encoded by nucleotides 2380 – 3171 of the tenascin-W nucleotide sequence).

Full length tenascin-W was cloned by the use of mouse tenascin-W specific primers derived from the above mouse tenascin-W cDNA and primers matching the vector of the same 19d whole mouse embryo cDNA library used before. To complete the 5' part the following PCR reactions using the above cDNA as template were performed: The first PCR reaction was performed using the primer pair 5'-ARGGAGATGGTGGCTGTATTTTCGG-3' (SEQ ID

by a second PCR reaction with the primer set 5'-TAGAATTCGGTCACCTGATTGGTCACTAGG-3' (SEQ ID NO:11) / 5'-TTATGATGTGCCAGATTATGCC-3' (SEQ ID NO:12). To complete the 3' part of the tenascin-W cDNA the following PCR reactions were performed: In the first reaction the primer pair 5'-CTCAAATTGATGGCTACATTTTGACC-3' (SEQ ID NO:13) / 5'-AAGCCGACAACCTTGATTGGAGAC-3' (SEQ ID NO:14) was used followed by the primer pair 5'-TACCAGTTCCCAAATGGCACCG-3' (SEQ ID NO:15) / 5'-AAACCTCTGGCGAAGAAGTCC-3' (SEQ ID NO:16). In each case the longest products were cloned. These overlapping tenascin-W cDNA clones were assembled into one full length mouse tenascin-W cDNA and cloned into the expression vector pCEP/Pu (see Kohfeldt et al. (1997). FEBS Lett. 414:557-61). At the 3'end of the tenascin-W cDNA a 6xHis-tag was inserted in front of the stop codon to allow the purification of full length mouse tenascin-W protein expressed in mammalian cell culture.

Example 2: Characterization of mouse Tenascin-W

The full length cDNA of mouse tenascin-W was cloned as described in example 1. The full length tenascin-W cDNA was transfected into HE[illegible] cells using the transfection reagent fugene (Roche). Transfected cells [illegible] selected for with puromycin and the medium containing the secreted tenascin-W protein was collected and the protein was purified by sequential chromatography over a gelatin-agarose column (Sigma) to remove any contaminating fibronectin in the preparation and by adsorption to a Ni-NTA matrix (Qiagen). The tenascin-W was eluted from the nickel column by 250mM imidazole. The cDNA sequence encodes a typical member of the tenascin protein family and harbors from the N-terminus to the C-terminus of the protein the following structural domains: signal petide for secretion, N-terminal domain for dimerisation of two tenascin-W trimers that are assembled by the heptad repeats. This results in a disulfide-linked hexameric protein complex where each subunit contains three and a half EGF-like repeats, nine fibronectin type III repeats, and a fibrinogen-like C-terminal globular domain. Furthermore, electronmicrographs of tenascin-W after rotary shadowing revealed hexameric molecules with the six subunits of 50nm length radiating from a central globular domain. The recombinant protein was analyzed by

SDS-PAGE (sodium dodecyl sulfate - polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis) on 6% polyacrylamide gels, under reducing and non-reducing conditions as well as by electron microscopy after rotary shadowing using the same procedure as described for tenascin-C (Chiquet-Ehrismann, R. et al. (1988) Cell 53, 383 – 390). Tenascin-W showed a similarly slow migration as the hexameric tenascin-C protein. Two tenascin-W variants of 170 and 190 kD were identified in developing mouse tissues by western blotting. High expression of the large variant of tenascin-W was found in the metastatic tumors of ras-transgenic mice, but not in the myc- or neuT-transformed non-metastatic tumors. Expression of low amounts of the small variant of tenascin-W was found in healthy tissue, e.g. blood serum.

Example 3: Antibody production, immunohistochemistry and immunoblots

The bacterially expressed recombinant fragment of tenascin-W as described above in example 1, was used to raise polyclonal antisera in rabbits using standard immunization procedures as hereinabove described. This antiserum reacted specifically with purified full length recombinant tenascin-W as well as with endogenous tenascin-W in tissue extracts and cryosections. These antisera were used to detect tenascin-W in tissue extracts and cryosections of developing mouse embryos as well as in mouse mammary tumours using the same methods as described for tenascin-Y (Hagios, C. et al. (1996) J. Cell Biol. 134, 1499-1512). Briefly, tissues were fixed in ice-cold 4% paraformaldehyde in phosphate-bufffered saline (PBS) overnight, washed with PBS and cryoprotected with 25% sucrose in PBS overnight at 4°C. The tissues were embedded in OCT (Optimal Cutting Temperature) mounting medium (Cat. No. 27050 OCT Compound by Ted Pella Inc., CA) and sections of 12-16µm were cut and collected onto glass slides. The sections were air-dried for 2 hours before staining with the anti-tenascin-W antiserum followed by a fluorescently labelled secondary antibody.

Example 4: Expression of tenascin-W during development

The anti-tenascin-W antiserum, as described in example 3, was used to investigate its expression during normal mouse development by immunohistochemistry. Tenascin-W first appears at embryonic day 11.5 (E11.5) in the maxillary process. Between E14.5 and E16.5 tenascin-W and tenascin-C overlap in developing connective tissue (palate and mandible) in the face and jaw. Furthermore tenascin-W is found in the ECM of smooth muscle, mesothelia and bone. In the adult mouse tenascin-W is found in a subset of the tenascin-C-positive ECM of the aortic valve and the limbus. In these locations its expression coincides with the stem cell compartment of the respective tissue. Tenascin-W is also expressed in the periosteum, the stem cell compartment for osteogenesis. Finally, it can be found in kidney and the digestive tract in a subset of tenascin-C-positive regions, but not in the brain.

Example 5: Tenascin-W expression in tumour cells

Tenascin-W expression in tumour cells was tested and compared with the known results for tenascin-C which was found to be highly expressed in tumour tissues (Chiquet-Ehrismann, R. (1993) Sem. Cancer Biol. 4, 301-310). Therefore, mouse mammary tumours were used. Mouse mammary tumours develop readily in transgenic mice expressing oncogenes under the control of mammary gland-specific promoters. Overexpression of c-myc results in the growth of non-metastatic tumours whereas overexpression of Ha-ras leads to the development of metastatic tumours (Li, F. et al. (1994) Int. J. Cancer 59, 560-568). Using this model system, high expression of the large variant of tenascin-W (about 190 kDa) was found in the tumours of ras-transgenic mice, but not in the myc- or neuT-transformed non-metastatic tumours, whereas tenascin-C was over-expressed in both types of tumours (see example 2). In transgenic mice overexpressing neuT develop non-metastasizing mammary tumours, whereas in double transgenic mice overexpressing neuT together with EphB4 receptor tyrosine kinase the tumours are metastatic (Munarini, N. et al. (2002) Cell Sci. 115, 25-37). Using this model system we again found high expression of tenascin-W in the metastatic tumours, but not in the non-metastatic ones. These expression patterns were confirmed by SDS-PAGE (SDS-polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis), by fractionating tumour extracts,

blotting on polyvinylidene difluoride membranes, and analyzing the extract using an anti-tenascin-W antisera.

Example 6: Blood serum analysis

The content of tenascin-W in serum is analyzed by Western blotting as described for the tissue extracts. For improved sensitivity a Sandwich ELISA test is developed as described previously for tenascin-C (Schenk et al. 1995. Int. J. Cancer 61:443-449). Briefly, 96-well plates are coated with either polyclonal or monoclonal anti-tenascin-W antibodies. Then the serum samples are applied, the wells washed and the bound tenascin-W is detected by either a polyclonal or a monoclonal anti-tenascin-W antibody followed by an approporate peroxidase-labeled secondary antibody.

Example 7: Adhesion assay

The purified tenascin-W was used for cell adhesion studies of MDA-MB435 mammary carcinoma cells, T98G glioblastoma cells and NIH-3T3 fibroblasts. [illegible] bered to tenascin-W coated at 2-100 µg/ml (no adhesion under 2 µg/ml) [illegible] lar extent as to fibronectin, whereas cell adhesion to tenascin-C was minimal. The adhesion to tenascin-W could be blocked by including 10µg/ml of the function blocking anti-β1 integrin P4C10 (Sigma) in the adhesion assay implying a β1 integrin as the cellular receptor for tenascin-W. In general, 60-well microtiter plates (Nunc) were coated with 2-100 µg/ml tenascin-W for 1h at 37°C. The non-coated plastic surface was blocked with 1% heat-inactivated BSA in PBS. Cells were trypsinised, trypsin was blocked with 100µg/ml soybean trypsin inhibitor in PBS and, cells were resuspended in serum-free medium and counted. 200-500 cells per well were plated for the indicated time points, fixed by addition of glutaraldehyde (2% final concentration) for 15 minutes and stained with 0.1% crystalviolet in 20% methanol for 30 minutes. Cells were observed under a Nikon microscope (Nikon diaphot) and pictures were taken with a Nikon camera.

Example 8: DNA replication and proliferation assay

96-well plates (Falcon) are coated as described above. Cells are serum [illegible]

the coated plates in the presence of 1 % serum or 40nM PDGF BB (Platelet-derived growth factor BB). 14h later cells are labelled with radioactive ^{3}H-thymidine (0.5µCi/well) for 4h at 37°C, incorporated ^{3}H-thymidine precipitated with 10% TCA and determined with a Beckman scintillation counter after cell lysis in 0.3N NaOH, 2% SDS.

Example 9: In vitro binding assay (ELISA)

96-well ELISA plates are coated with the indicated ECM proteins (e.g. fibronectin or tenascin-W for 1h at 37°C, blocked with 1% milkpowder, 0.05% Tween-20 in PBS. ECM proteins (tenascin-W or fibronectin) are added in blocking solution for 1h, washed with blocking solution and the appropriate antibodies are added. Bound proteins are detected by immune reaction with a peroxidase-coupled secondary antibody followed by colour reaction with 21mg/ml citric acid 1-hydrate, 34mg/ml $Na_2HPO_4.2H_2O$, 0.4mg/ml phenylenediamine, 1µl H_2O_2 that is stopped with 4M sulphuric acid. The absorbance was read at 590nm.

Example 10: Immunofluorescence microscopy

10^4 cells are transferred onto 4-well Cellstar plastic plates (Greiner) that are coated with ECM proteins. Cells are fixed with 4% paraformaldehyde, 50mM phosphate buffer, 5mM EDTA in PBS for 15 minutes, blocked with 3% BSA, 0.5% Tween-20 in PBS and incubated with primary and secondary antibodies in blocking solution. Slides are embedded in 10.5% Mowiol containing 2.5% DABCO as antifade agent. Cells are analysed by microscopy.

As is apparent to one of ordinary skill in the art, variations in the above-described methods can be introduced with ease to attain the same objective. Various incubating conditions, labels, apparatus and materials can be chosen according to individual preference. All publications referred to herein are incorporated by reference in their entirety as if each were referred to individually.

SEQUENCE LISTING

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Glu Gln Asn Ile Ile Phe Arg His Asn Ile Arg Leu Gln Thr Pro Gln
                85                  90                  95

Lys Asn Cys Asp Leu Ala Asp Ser Val Gln Asp Leu Leu Ala Arg Met
            100                 105                 110

Lys Lys Leu Glu Glu Glu Met Ala Glu Leu Lys Glu Gln Cys Asn Thr
        115                 120                 125

Asn Arg Cys Cys Gln Gly Ala Ala Asp Leu Ser Arg His Cys Ser Gly
    130                 135                 140

His Gly Thr Phe Leu Pro Glu Thr Cys Ser Cys His Cys Asp Gln Gly
145                 150                 155                 160

Trp Glu Gly Ala Asp Cys Asp Gln Pro Thr Cys Pro Gly Ala Cys Asn
                165                 170                 175

Gly His Gly Arg Cys Val Asp Gly Gln Cys Val Cys Asp Ala Pro Tyr
            180                 185                 190

Val Gly Val Asp Cys Ala Tyr Ala Ala Cys Pro Gln Asp Cys Ser Gly
        195                 200                 205

His Gly Val Cys Val Gln Gly Val Cys Gln Cys His Glu Asp Phe Thr
    210                 215                 220

Ala Glu Asp Cys Ser Glu Gln Arg Cys Pro Gly Asp Cys Ser Gly Asn
225                 230                 235                 240

Gly Phe Cys Asp Thr Gly Glu Cys Tyr Cys Glu Met Gly Phe Thr Gly
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Pro Asp Cys Ser Gln Val Val Ala Pro Gln Gly Leu Gln Leu Leu Lys
            260                 265                 270
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Ser Thr Glu Asn Ser Leu Leu Val Ser Trp Glu Pro Ser Ser Glu Val
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Asp Tyr Tyr Leu Leu Ser Tyr Tyr Pro Leu Gly Lys Glu Gln Ala Thr
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Lys Gln Val Arg Val Pro Lys Glu Gln His Thr Tyr Asp Ile Thr Gly
305                 310                 315                 320

Leu Leu Pro Gly Thr Lys Tyr Ile Val Thr Leu Arg Asn Val Lys Lys
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Asp Ile Ser Ser Ser Pro Gln His Leu Leu Ala Thr Thr Asp Leu Ala
            340                 345                 350

Val Leu Gly Thr Ala Trp Val Asn Glu Glu Thr Glu Thr Ser Leu Asp
        355                 360                 365

Val Glu Trp Glu Asn Pro Leu Thr Glu Val Asp Tyr Tyr Lys Leu Arg
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Tyr Gly Pro Leu Thr Gly Gln Glu Val Thr Leu Thr Val Pro Lys
385                 390                 395                 400

Ser Arg Asp Pro Lys Ser Arg Tyr Asp Ile Ile Gly Leu Gln Pro Gly
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Thr Glu Tyr Lys Ile Thr Val Val Pro Ile Arg Gly Asp Leu Glu Gly
            420                 425                 430

Lys Pro Ile Leu Leu Asn Gly Arg Thr Glu Ile Asp Gly Pro Thr Asn
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Val Val Thr Asn Gln Val Thr Glu Asp Thr Ala Ser Val Ser Trp Asp
    450                 455                 460

Pro Val Arg Ala Asp Ile Asp Lys Tyr Val Val Arg Tyr Ile Ala Pro
465                 470                 475                 480

Asp Gly Glu Thr Lys Glu Lys Ala Val Pro Lys Asp Gln Ser Ser Thr
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Val Leu Thr Gly Leu Lys Pro Gly Glu Ala Tyr Lys Val Phe Val Trp
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Ala Glu Arg Gly Asn Gln Gly Ser Lys Lys Ala Asp Thr Lys Ala Leu
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Thr Glu Ile Asp Ser Pro Glu Asn Leu Val Thr Asp Arg Val Thr Glu
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Asn Ser Leu Ser Val Ser Trp Asp Pro Val Glu Ala Asp Ile Asp Arg
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Tyr Val Val Ser Tyr Thr Ser Val Asp Gly Glu Thr Lys Gln Val Pro
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Val Lys Lys Asp Gln Arg Ser Thr Val Leu Thr Gly Leu Ser Pro Gly
580 585 590

Val Glu Tyr Lys Val Tyr Val Trp Ala Glu Lys Gly Asp Arg Glu Ser
595 600 605

Lys Lys Ala Asn Thr Lys Ala Pro Thr Asp Ile Asp Ser Pro Lys Asn
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Leu Val Thr Asp Gln Val Thr Glu Asn Thr Leu Ser Val Ser Trp Asp
625 635 640

Pro Val Glu Ala Asn Ile Asp Arg Tyr Met Val Ser Tyr Thr Ser Ala
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Asp Gly Glu Thr Arg Glu Val Pro Val Pro Lys Glu Lys Ser Ser Thr
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Val Leu Thr Gly Leu Arg Pro Gly Val Glu Tyr Lys Val His Val Trp
675 680 685

Ala Gln Lys Gly Thr Gln Glu Ser Arg Lys Ala Asn Thr Lys Ala Pro
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Thr Asp Ile Asp Gly Pro Lys Asn Leu Val Thr Asp Gln Val Thr Glu
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Thr Thr Leu Ser Val Ser Trp Asp Pro Val Glu Ala Asp Ile Asp Arg
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Tyr Met Val Arg Tyr Thr Ser Pro Asp Gly Glu Thr Lys Glu Val Pro
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Val Ser Lys Asp Lys Ser Ser Thr Val Leu Arg Gly Leu Arg Pro Gly
755 760 765

Val Glu Tyr Lys Val Asp Val Trp Ala Gln Lys Gly Ala Gln Asp Ser
770 775 780

Arg Lys Ala Asn Thr Lys Ala Pro Thr Asp Ile Asp Ser Pro Lys Asn
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Leu Val Thr Glu Gln Val Ala Glu Ser Thr Ala Thr Val Ser Trp Asp
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Pro Val Glu Ala Asp Ile Asp Arg Tyr Val Val Arg Tyr Thr Ser Ala
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Asp Gly Glu Thr Arg Glu Ile Pro Val Arg Lys Glu Lys Ser Ser Thr
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Val Leu Thr Gly Leu Arg Pro Gly Val Glu Tyr Thr Val Gln Val Trp
850 855 860

Ala Gln Lys Gly Ala Arg Glu Ser Lys Lys Ala Lys Thr Lys Ala Pro
870 875 880

Thr Glu Ile Asp Ser Pro Lys Asn Leu Val Thr Asn Arg Val Thr Glu
885 890 895

Asn Thr Ala Thr Ile Ser Trp Asp Pro Val Arg Ala Asn Ile Asp Arg
900 905 910

Tyr Met Val Arg Tyr Thr Ser Ala Asp Gly Glu Thr Lys Glu Ile Pro
915 920 925

Val Ser Lys Asp Gln Ser Asn Thr Ile Leu Thr Gly Leu Lys Pro Gly
930 935 940

Met Glu Tyr Thr Ile His Val Trp Ala Gln Lys Gly Ala Arg Glu Ser
945 950 955 960

Lys Lys Ala Asp Thr Lys Ala Leu Thr Glu Ile Asp Pro Pro Arg Asn
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Leu Arg Pro Phe Gly Val Thr His Ser Gly Gly Val Leu Thr Trp Leu
980 985 990

Pro Pro Ser Ala Gln Ile Asp Gly Tyr Ile Leu Thr Tyr Gln Phe Pro
995 1000 1005

Asn Gly Thr Val Lys Gly Val Glu Leu Pro Arg Gly Gln Gln Arg
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Phe Glu Leu Gln Asp Leu Glu Gln Gly Val Thr Tyr Pro Val Ser
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Leu Val Ala Phe Lys Gly Asn Gln Arg Ser Arg Thr Val Ser Thr
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Thr Leu Ser Thr Val Asp Ala Arg Phe Pro His Pro Ser Asp Cys
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Ser Gln Val Gln Gln Asn Thr Asn Ala Ala Ser Gly Leu Tyr Thr
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Ile Tyr Leu Asn Gly Asp Ala Ser Arg Pro Met Gln Val Tyr Cys
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Asp Met Asp Thr Asp Gly Gly Gly Trp Ile Val Phe Gln Arg Arg
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Asn Thr Gly Gln Leu Asp Phe Phe Lys Arg Trp Arg Ser Tyr
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Glu Gly Phe Gly Asp Pro Met Lys Glu Phe Trp Leu Gly Leu Asp
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Lys Leu His Asn Leu Thr Thr Gly Thr Thr Thr Arg Tyr Glu Val
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Arg Ala Asp Leu Gln Thr Phe Asn Glu Ser Ala Tyr Ala Val Tyr
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Asp Phe Phe Gln Val Ala Ser Ser Lys Glu Arg Tyr Lys Leu Ser
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Val Gly Lys Tyr Arg Gly Thr Ala Gly Asp Ala Leu Thr Tyr His
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Ser Ile Pro Tyr Val Glu Leu Lys Ile Arg Pro Phe Gly Tyr Ser
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gct tcg gcc cca gcc act ctg gag cct ccc ggc tgc agc aac aag gag 96
Ala Ser Ala Pro Ala Thr Leu Glu Pro Pro Gly Cys Ser Asn Lys Glu
20 25 30

caa cag gtc act gtc agc cac acc tac aag atc gat gtg ccc aag tct 144
Gln Gln Val Thr Val Ser His Thr Tyr Lys Ile Asp Val Pro Lys Ser
35 40 45

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gcc ttg gtt cag gtt gac gct gac cct cag ccc ctc agt gac gat ggg      192
Ala Leu Val Gln Val Asp Ala Asp Pro Gln Pro Leu Ser Asp Asp Gly
    50                  55                  60

gct tcg ctc ttg gcc ctg ggg gag gcc agg gag gaa cag aac atc atc      240
Ala Ser Leu Leu Ala Leu Gly Glu Ala Arg Glu Glu Gln Asn Ile Ile
65                  70                  75                  80

ttc agg cac aac atc cgc ctt cag acg cca cag aag gac tgc gag ttg      288
Phe Arg His Asn Ile Arg Leu Gln Thr Pro Gln Lys Asp Cys Glu Leu
                85                  90                  95

gca ggc agt gtc cag gac ctc ctg gcc cgg gtg aag aag ctg gag gaa      336
Ala Gly Ser Val Gln Asp Leu Leu Ala Arg Val Lys Lys Leu Glu Glu
            100                 105                 110

gag atg gtg gag atg aag gaa cag tgt agt gcc cag cgc tgc tgc cag      384
Glu Met Val Glu Met Lys Glu Gln Cys Ser Ala Gln Arg Cys Cys Gln
        115                 120                 125

gga gtc act gat cta agc cgc cac tgc agc ggc cac ggg acc ttc tcc      432
Gly Val Thr Asp Leu Ser Arg His Cys Ser Gly His Gly Thr Phe Ser
    130                 135                 140

ctg gag acc tgc agc tgc cac gaa gag ggc agg gag ggc ccc gcc      480
Leu Glu Thr Cys Ser Cys His Glu Glu Gly Arg Glu Gly Pro Ala
145                 150                 155                 160

tgc gag cgg ctg gcc tgc ccc ggg gcg tgc agc ggc cac ggg cgt tgc      528
Cys Glu Arg Leu Ala Cys Pro Gly Ala Cys Ser Gly His Gly Arg Cys
                165                 170                 175

gtg gac ggg cgc tgc ctg tgc cat gag ccc tac gtg ggt gcc gac tgc      576
Val Asp Gly Arg Cys Leu Cys His Glu Pro Tyr Val Gly Ala Asp Cys
            180                 185                 190

ggc tac ccg gcc tgc cct gag aac tgc agc gga cac ggc gag tgc gtg      624
Gly Tyr Pro Ala Cys Pro Glu Asn Cys Ser Gly His Gly Glu Cys Val
        195                 200                 205

cgc ggc gtg tgc cag tgc cac gaa gac ttc atg tcg gag gac tgc agc      672
Arg Gly Val Cys Gln Cys His Glu Asp Phe Met Ser Glu Asp Cys Ser
    210                 215                 220

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Glu Lys Arg Cys Pro Gly Asp Cys Ser Gly His Gly Phe Cys Asp Thr
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ggc gag tgc tac tgc gag gag ggc ttc aca ggc ctg gac tgt gcc cag      768
Gly Glu Cys Tyr Cys Glu Glu Gly Phe Thr Gly Leu Asp Cys Ala Gln
                245                 250                 255

gtg gtc acc cca cag ggc ctg cag ctg ctc aag aac acg gag gat tct      816
Val Val Thr Pro Gln Gly Leu Gln Leu Leu Lys Asn Thr Glu Asp Ser
            260                 265                 270

ctg ctg gtg agc tgg gag ccc tcc agc cag gtg gat cac tac ctc ctc      864
Leu Leu Val Ser Trp Glu Pro Ser Ser Gln Val Asp His Tyr Leu Leu
        275                 280                 285

agc tac tac ccc ctg ggg aag gag ctc tct ggg aag cag atc caa gtg      912
Ser Tyr Tyr Pro Leu Gly Lys Glu Leu Ser Gly Lys Gln Ile Gln Val
    290                 295                 300

ccc aag gag cag cac agc tat gag att ctt ggt ttg ctg cct gga acc      960
Pro Lys Glu Gln His Ser Tyr Glu Ile Leu Gly Leu Leu Pro Gly Thr
305                 310                 315                 320

[illegible]tac ata gtc acc ctg cgt aac gtc aag aat gaa gtt tct agc agc     1008
[illegible] Ile Val Thr Leu Arg Asn Val Lys Asn Glu Val Ser Ser Ser
                325                 330                 335

[illegible]cag cat cta ctt gcc acc aca gac ctt gct gtg ctt ggc act gcc     1056
Pro Gln His Leu Leu Ala Thr Thr Asp Leu Ala Val Leu Gly Thr Ala
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tgg gtg aca gat gag act gag aac tcc ctt gac gtg gag tgg gaa aac     1104
Trp Val Thr Asp Glu Thr Glu Asn Ser Leu Asp Val Glu Trp Glu Asn
        355                 360                 365

ccc tca act gag gtg gac tac tac aag ctg cga tat ggc ccc atg aca     1152
Pro Ser Thr Glu Val Asp Tyr Tyr Lys Leu Arg Tyr Gly Pro Met Thr
    370                 375                 380

gga cag gag gta gct gag gtc act gtg ccc aag agc agt gac ccc aag     1200
Gly Gln Glu Val Ala Glu Val Thr Val Pro Lys Ser Ser Asp Pro Lys
385                 390                 395                 400

agc cga tat gac atc act ggt ctg cac ccg ggg act gag tat aag atc     1248
Ser Arg Tyr Asp Ile Thr Gly Leu His Pro Gly Thr Glu Tyr Lys Ile
                405                 410                 415
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Thr Val Val Pro Met Arg Gly Glu Leu Glu Gly Lys Pro Ile Leu Leu
420 425 430

aat ggc agg aca gaa att gac agt cca acc aat gtt gtc act gat cga 1344
Asn Gly Arg Thr Glu Ile Asp Ser Pro Thr Asn Val Val Thr Asp Arg
435 440 445

gtg act gaa gac aca gca act gtc tcc tgg gac cca gtg cag gct gtc 1392
Val Thr Glu Asp Thr Ala Thr Val Ser Trp Asp Pro Val Gln Ala Val
450 455 460

ata gac aag tat gta gtg cgc tac act tct gct gat ggg gac acc aag 1440
Ile Asp Lys Tyr Val Val Arg Tyr Thr Ser Ala Asp Gly Asp Thr Lys
465 470 475 480

gaa atg gca gtg cac aag gat gag agc agc act gtc ctg acg ggc ctg 1488
Glu Met Ala Val His Lys Asp Glu Ser Ser Thr Val Leu Thr Gly Leu
485 490 495

aag cca gga gag gca tac aag gtc tac gtg tgg gct gaa agg ggc aac 1536
Lys Pro Gly Glu Ala Tyr Lys Val Tyr Val Trp Ala Glu Arg Gly Asn
500 505 510

cag ggg agc aag aaa gct gac acc aat gcc ctc aca gaa att gac agc 1584
Gln Gly Ser Lys Lys Ala Asp Thr Asn Ala Leu Thr Glu Ile Asp Ser
515 520 525

cca gca aac ctg gtg act gac cgg gtg act gag aat acc gcc acc atc 1632
Pro Ala Asn Leu Val Thr Asp Arg Val Thr Glu Asn Thr Ala Thr Ile
530 535 540

tcc tgg gac ccg gta cag gcc acc att gac aag tac gtg gtg cgc tac 1680
Ser Trp Asp Pro Val Gln Ala Thr Ile Asp Lys Tyr Val Val Arg Tyr
545 550 555 560

acc tct gct gac gac caa gag acc aga gag gtt ctg gtg ggg aag gag 1728
Thr Ser Ala Asp Asp Gln Glu Thr Arg Glu Val Leu Val Gly Lys Glu
565 570 575

cag agc agc act gtc ctg aca ggc ctg agg cca ggt gtg gag tac aca 1776
Gln Ser Ser Thr Val Leu Thr Gly Leu Arg Pro Gly Val Glu Tyr Thr
580 585 590

gtg cat gtc tgg gcc cag aag ggg gac cga gag agc aag aag gct gac 1824
Val His Val Trp Ala Gln Lys Gly Asp Arg Glu Ser Lys Lys Ala Asp

595 600 605

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acc aac gcc ccg aca gat att gac agc ccc aaa aac ctg gtg act gac      1872
Thr Asn Ala Pro Thr Asp Ile Asp Ser Pro Lys Asn Leu Val Thr Asp
610                 615                 620

cgg gtg aca gag aat atg gcc acg gtc tcc tgg gac ccg gtg cag gcc      1920
Arg Val Thr Glu Asn Met Ala Thr Val Ser Trp Asp Pro Val Gln Ala
625                 630                 635                 640

gcc att gac aag tac gtg gtg cgc tac acc tct gct ggt gga gag acc      1968
Ala Ile Asp Lys Tyr Val Val Arg Tyr Thr Ser Ala Gly Gly Glu Thr
                645                 650                 655

agg gag gtt ccg gtg ggg aag gag cag agc agc aca gtc ctg aca ggc      2016
Arg Glu Val Pro Val Gly Lys Glu Gln Ser Ser Thr Val Leu Thr Gly
            660                 665                 670

ctg aga ccg ggt atg gag tac atg gtg cac gtg tgg gcc cag aag ggg      2064
Leu Arg Pro Gly Met Glu Tyr Met Val His Val Trp Ala Gln Lys Gly
        675                 680                 685

gac cag gag agc aag aag gcc gac acc aag gcc [illegible] att gac      2112
Asp Gln Glu Ser Lys Lys Ala Asp Thr Lys [illegible] Gln Thr Asn Ile Asp
    690                 695                 700

agc ccc caa aac ctg gtg acc gac cgg gtg aca gag aac atg gcc act      2160
Ser Pro Gln Asn Leu Val Thr Asp Arg Val Thr Glu Asn Met Ala Thr
705                 710                 715                 720

gtc tcc tgg gac ccg gtg cgg gcc acc att gac agg tat gtg gtg cgc      2208
Val Ser Trp Asp Pro Val Arg Ala Thr Ile Asp Arg Tyr Val Val Arg
                725                 730                 735

tac acc tct gcc aag gac gga gag acc agg gag gtt ccg gtg ggg aag      2256
Tyr Thr Ser Ala Lys Asp Gly Glu Thr Arg Glu Val Pro Val Gly Lys
            740                 745                 750

gag cag agt agc act gtc ctg acg ggc ctg agg ccg ggt gtg gag tac      2304
Glu Gln Ser Ser Thr Val Leu Thr Gly Leu Arg Pro Gly Val Glu Tyr
        755                 760                 765

acg gtg cac gtg tgg gcc cag aag ggg gcc cag gag agc aag aag gct      2352
Thr Val His Val Trp Ala Gln Lys Gly Ala Gln Glu Ser Lys Lys Ala
    770                 775                 780
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Asp Thr Lys Ala Gln Thr Asp Ile Asp Ser Pro Gln Asn Leu Val Thr
785                 790                 795                 800

gac tgg gtg aca gag aat aca gcc act gtc tcc tgg gac ccg gtg cag     2448
Asp Trp Val Thr Glu Asn Thr Ala Thr Val Ser Trp Asp Pro Val Gln
                805                 810                 815

gcc acc att gac agg tat gtg gtg cac tac acg tct gcc aac gga gag     2496
Ala Thr Ile Asp Arg Tyr Val Val His Tyr Thr Ser Ala Asn Gly Glu
            820                 825                 830

acc agg gag gtt cca gtg ggg aag gag cag agc agc act gtc ctg acg     2544
Thr Arg Glu Val Pro Val Gly Lys Glu Gln Ser Ser Thr Val Leu Thr
        835                 840                 845

ggc ctg agg ccg ggc atg gag tac acg gtg cac gtg tgg gcc cag aag     2592
Gly Leu Arg Pro Gly Met Glu Tyr Thr Val His Val Trp Ala Gln Lys
    850                 855                 860

ggg aac cag gag agc aag aag gct gac acc aag gcc cag aca gaa att     2640
Gly Asn Gln Glu Ser Lys Lys Ala Asp Thr Lys Ala Gln Thr Glu Ile
865                 870                 875                 880

gac ggc ccc aaa aac ctg gtg acc gag tgg gtg acg gag aat atg gcc     2688
Asp Gly Pro Lys Asn Leu Val Thr Glu Trp Val Thr Glu Asn Met Ala
                885                 890                 895

act gtc tcc tgg gac ccg gtt cag gcc acc att gac aag tac atg gtg     2736
Thr Val Ser Trp Asp Pro Val Gln Ala Thr Ile Asp Lys Tyr Met Val
            900                 905                 910

cgc tac acc tct gct gac gga gag acc agg gag gtt ccg gtg ggg aag     2784
Arg Tyr Thr Ser Ala Asp Gly Glu Thr Arg Glu Val Pro Val Gly Lys
        915                 920                 925

gag cac agc agc act gtc ctg acg ggc ctg aga cca ggc atg gag tac     2832
Glu His Ser Ser Thr Val Leu Thr Gly Leu Arg Pro Gly Met Glu Tyr
    930                 935                 940

atg gtg cac gtg tgg gcc cag aag ggg gcc cag gag agc aag aag gct     2880
Met Val His Val Trp Ala Gln Lys Gly Ala Gln Glu Ser Lys Lys Ala
945                 950                 955                 960

gac acc aag gcc cag aca gaa ctc gac cct ccc aga aac ctt cgt cca     2928
Asp Thr Lys Ala Gln Thr Glu Leu Asp Pro Pro Arg Asn Leu Arg Pro
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Ser Ala Val Thr Gln Ser Gly Gly Ile Leu Thr Trp Thr Pro Pro Ser
            980                 985                 990

gct cag atc cac ggc tac att ctg  act tac cag ttc cca  gat ggc aca   3024
Ala Gln Ile His Gly Tyr Ile Leu  Thr Tyr Gln Phe Pro  Asp Gly Thr
        995                 1000                1005

gtt aag  gag atg cag ctg gga  cgg gaa gac cag agg  ttt gcg ttg      3069
Val Lys  Glu Met Gln Leu Gly  Arg Glu Asp Gln Arg  Phe Ala Leu
    1010                1015                1020

caa ggc  ctt gag caa ggc gcc  acc tac cct gtc tcc  ctt gtt gcc      3114
Gln Gly  Leu Glu Gln Gly Ala  Thr Tyr Pro Val Ser  Leu Val Ala
    1025                1030                1035

ttt aag  ggt ggt cgc cgg agc  aga aat gta tcc acc  acc ctc tcc      3159
Phe Lys  Gly Gly Arg Arg Ser  Arg Asn Val Ser Thr  Thr Leu Ser
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    1055                1060                1065

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Gln Gln  Asn Ser Asn Ala Ala  Ser Gly Leu Tyr Thr  Ile Tyr Leu
    1070                1075                1080

cat ggc  gat gcc agc cgg ccc  ctg cag gtg tac tgt  gac atg gaa      3294
His Gly  Asp Ala Ser Arg Pro  Leu Gln Val Tyr Cys  Asp Met Glu
    1085                1090                1095

acg gac  gga ggt ggc tgg att  gtc ttc cag agg cgg  aac act ggg      3339
Thr Asp  Gly Gly Gly Trp Ile  Val Phe Gln Arg Arg  Asn Thr Gly
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cag ctg  gat ttc ttc aag cga  tgg agg agc tat gtg  gaa ggc ttt      3384
Gln Leu  Asp Phe Phe Lys Arg  Trp Arg Ser Tyr Val  Glu Gly Phe
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ggg gac  ccc atg aag gag ttc  tgg ctt gga ctt gac  aag cta cac      3429
Gly Asp  Pro Met Lys Glu Phe  Trp Leu Gly Leu Asp  Lys Leu His
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aac ctc  acc acc ggc act cca  gcg cgg tat gag gtg  aga gtg gat      3474
Asn Leu  Thr Thr Gly Thr Pro  Ala Arg Tyr Glu Val  Arg Val Asp
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tta cag  act gcc aat gaa tct  gcc tat gct ata tat  gat ttc ttc      3519
Leu Gln  Thr Ala Asn Glu Ser  Ala Tyr Ala Ile Tyr  Asp Phe Phe
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caa gtg  gcc tcc agc aag gag  cgg tat aag ctg aca  gtt ggg aaa      3564
Gln Val  Ala Ser Ser Lys Glu  Arg Tyr Lys Leu Thr  Val Gly Lys
    1175                 1180                 1185

tac aga  ggc acg gca ggg gat  gct ctt act tac cac  aat gga tgg      3609
Tyr Arg  Gly Thr Ala Gly Asp  Ala Leu Thr Tyr His  Asn Gly Trp
    1190                 1195                 1200

aag ttt  aca act ttt gac aga  gac aat gat atc gca  ctc agc aac      3654
Lys Phe  Thr Thr Phe Asp Arg  Asp Asn Asp Ile Ala  Leu Ser Asn
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tgt gcc  ctg aca cat cat ggt  ggc tgg tgg tat aag  aac tgc cac      3699
Cys Ala  Leu Thr His His Gly  Gly Trp Trp Tyr Lys  Asn Cys His
    1220                 1225                 1230

ttg gcc  aac cct aat ggc aga  tat ggg gag acc aag  cac agt gag      3744
Leu Ala  Asn Pro Asn Gly Arg  Tyr Gly Glu Thr Lys  His Ser Glu
    1235                 1240                 1245

ggg gtg  aac tgg gag cct tgg  aaa gga cat gaa ttc  tcc att cct      3789
Gly Val  Asn Trp Glu Pro Trp  Lys Gly His Glu Phe  Ser Ile Pro
    1250                 1255                 1260

tac gtg  gag ttg aaa atc cgc  cct cat ggc tac agc  agg gag cct      3834
Tyr Val  Glu Leu Lys Ile Arg  Pro His Gly Tyr Ser  Arg Glu Pro
    1265                 1270                 1275

gtc ctg  ggc aga aag aag cgg  acg ctg aga gga agg  ctg cga acg      3879
Val Leu  Gly Arg Lys Lys Arg  Thr Leu Arg Gly Arg  Leu Arg Thr
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Phe
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35 40 45

Ala Leu Val Gln Val Asp Ala Asp Pro Gln Pro Leu Ser Asp Asp Gly
50 55 60

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65 70 75 80

Phe Arg His Asn Ile Arg Leu Gln Thr Pro Gln Lys Asp Cys Glu Leu
85 90 95

Ala Gly Ser Val Gln Asp Leu Leu Ala Arg Val Lys Leu Leu Glu
100 105 110

Glu Met Val Glu Met Lys Glu Gln Cys Ser Ala Gln Arg Cys Cys Gln
115 120 125

Gly Val Thr Asp Leu Ser Arg His Cys Ser Gly His Gly Thr Phe Ser
130 135 140

Leu Glu Thr Cys Ser Cys His Cys Glu Glu Gly Arg Glu Gly Pro Ala
145 150 155 160

Cys Glu Arg Leu Ala Cys Pro Gly Ala Cys Ser Gly His Gly Arg Cys
165 170 175

Val Asp Gly Arg Cys Leu Cys His Glu Pro Tyr Val Gly Ala Asp Cys
180 185 190

Gly Tyr Pro Ala Cys Pro Glu Asn Cys Ser Gly His Gly Glu Cys Val
195 200 205

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Arg Gly Val Cys Gln Cys His Glu Asp Phe Met Ser Glu Asp Cys Ser
    210                 215                 220

Glu Lys Arg Cys Pro Gly Asp Cys Ser Gly His Gly Phe Cys Asp Thr
225                 230                 235                 240

Gly Glu Cys Tyr Cys Glu Glu Gly Phe Thr Gly Leu Asp Cys Ala Gln
                245                 250                 255

Val Val Thr Pro Gln Gly Leu Gln Leu Leu Lys Asn Thr Glu Asp Ser
            260                 265                 270

Leu Leu Val Ser Trp Glu Pro Ser Ser Gln Val Asp His Tyr Leu Leu
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Ser Tyr Tyr Pro Leu Gly Lys Glu Leu Ser Gly Lys Gln Ile Gln Val
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21

CLAIMS:

1. A composition comprising an isolated nucleic acid molecule having a nucleotide sequence selected from the group consisting of:
   (a) a nucleotide sequence as set forth in SEQ ID NO: 1;
   (b) a nucleotide sequence encoding the amino acid sequence shown in SEQ ID NO: 2
   (c) a nucleotide sequence with at least 85% identity to the sequence of (a) or (b);
   (d) a subsequence of a least 50 consecutive nucleotides of a sequence of (a), (b) or (c), with the proviso that said subsequence does not fall between nucleotide 1027 and nucleotide 1076 of SEQ ID NO: 1; and
   (e) a nucleotide sequence complementary to any of the nucleotide sequences in (a),(b), (c), or (d).

2. The composition of claim 1, said composition comprising said isolated nucleic acid molecule having said nucleotide sequence with at least 85% identity to the sequence of (b) and encoding a variant of the amino acid sequence shown in SEQ ID NO: 2.

3. The composition of claim 2, wherein said variant comprises a conservative substitution of at least one amino acid in said amino acid sequence in SEQ ID: NO: 2.

4. The composition of claim 3, wherein said variant has stem cell differentiation inducing activity.

5. The composition of claim 1, said composition comprising said isolated nucleic acid molecule encoding the amino acid sequence shown in SEQ ID NO: 2.

6. The composition of claim 1, wherein said composition comprises a nucleic acid molecule having a subsequence that is antisense to SEQ ID NO:1 or a sequence having at least 85% identity thereto.

7. The composition of claim 6, wherein said antisense nucleic acid molecule comprises nucleotide residues that are resistant to nuclease degradation.

8. A nucleic acid vector comprising the nucleic acid molecule of any one of claims 1 to 5.

9. A host cell comprising the vector of claim 8.

10. A composition comprising an isolated polypeptide having an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of:

(a) an amino acid sequence as set forth in SEQ ID No. 2; and

(b) an amino acid sequence with at least 85% identity to the sequence of (a); and

a subsequence of at least 30 consecutive amino acids of the sequence of (a) or (b), with the proviso that said subsequence does not fall within amino acid nos.1102 and 1152 of SEQ ID NO:2.

11. The composition of claim 10, wherein said amino acid sequence in (b) comprises a conservative substitution of at least one amino acid in said amino acid sequence of SEQ ID: NO: 2.

12. The composition of claim 10, wherein said polypeptide or fragment has stem cell differentiation inducing activity.

13. The composition of claim 10, said composition comprising said fragment, said fragment exhibiting an epitope recognized by polyclonal antibodies raised against the polypeptide having the amino acid sequence shown in SEQ ID NO: 2.

14. The composition of claim 10, said composition comprising said polypeptide encoding the amino acid sequence shown in SEQ ID NO: 2.

15. An antibody specifically reactive against the composition of any one of claims 10 to 12, or 14

16. A composition comprising an isolated nucleic acid molecule having a nucleotide sequence selected from the group consisting of:

(a) a nucleotide sequence as set forth in SEQ ID No. 1 or SEQ ID No. 3;

(b) a nucleotide sequence encoding the amino acid sequence shown in SEQ ID NO: 2 or SEQ ID NO: 4;

(c) a nucleotide sequence with at least 35% identity to any one of the sequences of (a) or (b), preferably (a);

(d) a subsequence of a least 15 consecutive nucleotides of the sequence of (a),(b) or (c); and

(e) a nucleotide sequence complementary to (a),(b), (c), or (d),

and a pharmaceutically acceptable excipient, diluent or carrier.

17. The composition of claim 16, wherein said nucleic acid molecule encodes a protein having stem cell differentiation inducing activity.

18. The composition of claim 16, wherein said nucleic acid molecule has a subsequence that is antisense to SEQ ID NO:1 or SEQ ID NO:3.

19. The composition of claim 18, wherein said antisense nucleic acid molecule comprises nucleotide residues that are resistant to nuclease degradation.

20. The composition of claim 16, said composition comprising said isolated nucleic acid molecule encoding the amino acid sequence shown in SEQ ID NO: 2 or SEQ ID NO:4.

21. A composition comprising an isolated nucleic acid molecule as claimed in claim 16 for use as a pharmaceutical.

22. The composition of claim 21, wherein said isolated nucleic acid molecule has a subsequence that is antisense to SEQ ID NO:1 or SEQ ID NO:3.

23. A composition as claimed in any of claims 16 or 17, comprising said nucleic acid molecule having a subsequence selected from the group consisting of nucleotides 2380-3171 of SEQ ID No:1, nucleotides 2371-3162 of SEQ ID No:3, a complement of nucleotides 2380-3171 of SEQ ID No:1, and a complement of nucleotides 2371-3162 of SEQ ID No:3, or an RNA equivalent thereof.

24. The use of the nucleic acid molecule of any of claims [illegible] the manufacture of a medicament for the prophylaxis or treatment of cancer or bone pathologies.

25. A composition comprising tenascin-W and a pharmaceutically acceptable excipient, diluent or carrier.

26. The composition of claim 25, wherein said tenascin-W is recombinant.

27. A composition as claimed in claim 25, wherein said tenascin-W is a polypeptide having an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of:

(a) an amino acid sequence as set forth in SEQ ID No. 2 or 4;

(b) an amino acid sequence with at least 35% identity to the sequence of (a); and

(c) a subsequence of at least 30 consecutive amino acids of the sequence of (a) or (b).

28. The composition of claim 27, wherein said polypeptide has stem cell differentiation inducing activity.

29. The composition of claim 28, said composition comprising said polypeptide encoding the amino acid sequence shown in SEQ ID NO: 4.

30. The use of tenascin-W for the treatment or prophylactic treatment of any disease or condition requiring increased tenascin-W levels, e.g. thrombosis, wound healing or atherosclerosis, or for the treatment or prophylactic treatment of a condition ameliorated by the promotion of osteogenesis, e.g. bone healing, osteoporosis.

31. The use as claimed in claim 30, wherein tenascin-W has any one or more of the features of the compositions of claims 27 to 29.

32. The use of tenascin-W as a stem cell marker.

33. An antibody that specifically recognizes tenascin W for use as pharmaceutical.

34. The use of an antibody that specifically recognizes tenascin W for the manufacture of a medicament, for the prophylaxis or treatment of cancer, or for the prophylaxis or treatment of any disease or condition involving tenascin-W, e.g. excessive bone growth.

35. The use as claimed in claim 34, wherein said cancer is a metastatic tumour.

36. The use as claimed in any of claims 34 to 35, wherein the metastatic

37. The use as claimed in any of claims 34 to 36, wherein the tumour is a solid tumour.

38. The use as claimed in any of claims 34 to 37, wherein the tumour is a glioblastoma, prostate, lung, colorectal, osteo- or breast carcinoma.

39. A method for identifying agents for the prevention or the prophylactic treatment of tumourigenesis or the treatment or prophylactic treatment of tumours or cancer, or the treatment or prophylactic treatment of any disease or condition involving tenascin-W, e.g. a condition ameliorated by the promotion of osteogenesis, comprising contacting a test compound with a tenascin-W expressing cell sample and then measuring a change in one or more of:

(a) cell proliferation, e.g. cell progression entering S-phase of the cell cycle;

(b) DNA synthesis;

(c) cell adhesion;

(d) cell spreading;

(e) focal adhesion and actin stress fibre formation on fibronectin;

(f) cell binding to extracellular matrix (ECM)

relative to when said test compound is absent.

40. A method as claimed in claim 39, further comprising measuring a change in tenascin-W expression relative to when said test compound is absent.

41. A method as claimed in any one of the claims 39 or 40, wherein tenascin-W has any one or more of the features of the compositions of claims 27 to 29.

42. A method as claimed in any of claims 39 to 41, comprising culturing cells on a substrate.

43. A method as claimed in any of claims 39 to 42, wherein said sample is a human sample.

44. A method as claimed in any of claims 39 to 43, wherein said sample is a tissue sample.

45. A method as claimed in any of claims 39 to 43, wherein said sample is blood serum.

46. A method as claimed in any of claims 39 to 43, wherein said sample is cell free sample.

47. A method as claimed in claim 46 comprising measuring the binding of a test compound to tenascin-W, optionally also comprising measuring the binding of a control compound to tenascin-W.

48. A method as claimed in any of claims 39 to 47, wherein tenascin-W is measured using an antibody reactive against tenascin-W.

49. A method as claimed in claim 48, wherein said antibody is labelled with a fluorescent label, a fluorescence quencher, a radioactive label, a scintillant or an enzyme.

50. A method as claimed in any of claims 39 to 48, wherein tenascin-W is attached to a solid surface.

51. A method as claimed in claim 50 in the form of an enzyme linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA).

52. A substance for the prevention or the prophylactic treatment of tumourigenesis or the diagnosis or the treatment or prophylactic treatment of tumours, or the treatment or prophylactic treatment of any

by the promotion of osteogenesis, identified by a method as claimed in any of claims 39 to 51.

53. A method of diagnosing or prognosing cancer comprising:

(a) obtaining a sample from an individual;

(b) analysing said sample for the presence of tenascin-W

(c) correlating the presence of tenascin-W with an unfavourable prognosis or diagnosis.

54. A method of diagnosing or prognosing cancer as claimed in claim 53, comprising correlating in (c) an increase in tenascin-W relative to healthy tissue with an unfavourable prognosis or diagnosis.

55. A method of diagnosing or prognosing cancer as claimed in any of claims 53 to 54, wherein said sample is blood serum from an individual.

56. A method of diagnosing or prognosing cancer as claimed in any of claims 53 to 55, further comprising propagating cells in said sample in cell culture.

57. A method of diagnosing or prognosing cancer as claimed in any of claims 53 to 56, wherein said tenascin-W is detected using an antibody specific for tenascin-W, optionally wherein a control antibody specific to another tenascin is used to test for specificity.

58. A method of diagnosing or prognosing cancer as claimed in any of claims 53 to 57, wherein said tenascin-W is detected using an antibody specific for tenascin-W expressed in tumour tissue, optionally wherein a control antibody specific to tenascin-W expressed in healthy tissue, e.g. the small variant of tenascin-W (170kD) in blood serum of healthy individual, is used in a control reaction.

ABSTRACT

TENASCIN-W COMPOSITIONS AND USES THEREOF

Tenascin-W, an extracellular matrix molecule that is specificly expressed in metastatic tumours is provided. A system comprising a sample expressing tenascin-W is used as an *in vitro* method for screening possible anti-tumour agents or for agents that promote osteogenesis. Test substances are assayed for the ability to inhibit expression of tenascin-W in tumour cells or to increase expression of tenascin-W in cells of the periosteum.